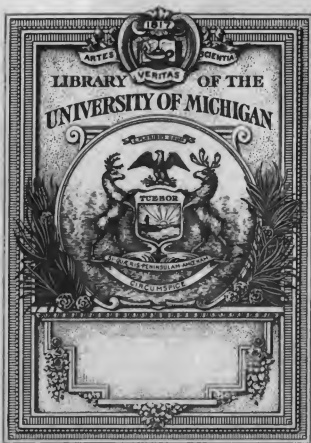




George C. Schemm

No. ...



THE GIFT OF

Dr. F. R. Schemm

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THE  
POETICAL WORKS

OF  
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

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## TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN.

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## PRELUDE.

### THE WAYSIDE INN.

ONE Autumn night, in Sudbury town,  
Across the meadows bare and brown,  
The windows of the wayside inn  
Gleamed red with fire-light through the leaves  
Of woodbine, hanging from the eaves  
Their crimson curtains rent and thin.

As ancient is this hostelry  
As any in the land may be,  
Built in the old Colonial day,  
When men lived in a grander way,  
With ampler hospitality;  
A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,  
Now somewhat fallen to decay,  
With weather-stains upon the wall,  
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,  
And creaking and uneven floors,  
And chimneys huge, and tiled and tall.

A region of repose it seems,  
A place of slumber and of dreams,  
Remote among the wooded hills!  
For there no noisy railway speeds,  
Its torch-race scattering smoke and gleeds;

But noon and night, the panting teams  
Stop under the great oaks, that throw  
Tangles of light and shade below,  
On roofs and doors and window-sills.  
Across the road the barns display  
Their lines of stalls, their mows of hay,  
Through the wide doors the breezes blow,  
The wattled cocks strut to and fro,  
And, half effaced by rain and shine,  
The Red Horse prances on the sign.  
Round this old-fashioned, quaint abode  
Deep silence reigned, save when a gust  
Went rushing down the county road,  
And skeletons of leaves, and dust,  
A moment quickened by its breath,  
Shuddered and danced their dance of death,  
And through the ancient oaks o'erhead  
Mysterious voices moaned and fled.

But from the parlor of the inn  
A pleasant murmur smote the ear,  
Like water rushing through a weir;  
Oft interrupted by the din  
Of laughter and of loud applause,  
And, in each intervening pause,  
The music of a violin.  
The fire-light, shedding over all  
The splendor of its ruddy glow,  
Filled the whole parlor large and low;  
It gleamed on wainscot and on wall,  
It touched with more than wonted grace  
Fair Princess Mary's pictured face;  
It bronzed the rafters overhead,

On the old spinet's ivory keys  
It played inaudible melodies,  
It crowned the sombre clock with flame,  
The hands, the hours, the maker's name,  
And painted with a livelier red  
The Landlord's coat-of-arms again:  
And, flashing on the window-pane,  
Emblazoned with its light and shade  
The jovial rhymes, that still remain,  
Writ near a century ago,  
By the great Major Molineaux,  
Whom Hawthorne has immortal made.

Before the blazing fire of wood  
Erect the rapt musician stood;  
And ever and anon he bent  
His head upon his instrument,  
And seemed to listen, till he caught  
Confessions of its secret thought,—  
The joy, the triumph, the lament,  
The exultation and the pain;  
Then, by the magic of his art,  
He soothed the throbbings of its heart,  
And lulled it into peace again.

Around the fireside at their ease  
There sat a group of friends, entranced  
With the delicious melodies;  
Who from the far-off noisy town  
Had to the wayside inn come down,  
To rest beneath its old oak-trees.  
The fire-light on their faces glanced,  
Their shadows on the wainscot danced,

And, though of different lands and speech,  
Each had his tale to tell, and each  
Was anxious to be pleased and please.  
And while the sweet musician plays,  
Let me in outline sketch them all,  
Perchance uncouthly as the blaze  
With its uncertain touch portrays  
Their shadowy semblance on the wall.

But first the Landlord will I trace;  
Grave in his aspect and attire;  
A man of ancient pedigree,  
A Justice of the Peace was he,  
Known in all Sudbury as "The Squire."  
Proud was he of his name and race,  
Of old Sir William and Sir Hugh,  
And in the parlor, full in view,  
His coat-of-arms, well framed and glazed,  
Upon the wall in colors blazed;  
He beareth gules upon his shield,  
A chevron argent in the field,  
With three wolf's heads, and for the crest  
A Wyvern part-per-pale addressed  
Upon a helmet barred; below  
The scroll reads, "By the name of Howe."  
And over this, no longer bright,  
Though glimmering with a latent light,  
Was hung the sword his grandsire bore,  
In the rebellious days of yore,  
Down there at Concord in the fight.

A youth was there, of quiet ways,  
A Student of old books and days,

To whom all tongues and lands were known,  
And yet a lover of his own;  
With many a social virtue graced,  
And yet a friend of solitude;  
A man of such a genial mood  
The heart of all things he embraced,  
And yet of such fastidious taste,  
He never found the best too good.  
Books were his passion and delight,  
And in his upper room at home  
Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,  
In vellum bound, with gold bedight,  
Great volumes garmented in white,  
Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.  
He loved the twilight that surrounds  
The border-land of old romance;  
Where glitter hauberk, helm, and lance,  
And banner waves, and trumpet sounds,  
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,  
And mighty warriors sweep along,  
Magnified by the purple mist,  
The dusk of centuries and of song.  
The chronicles of Charlemagne,  
Of Merlin and the Mort d'Arthure,  
Mingled together in his brain  
With tales of Flores and Blanche fleur,  
Sir Ferumbras, Sir Eglamour,  
Sir Launcelot, Sir Morgadour,  
Sir Guy, Sir Bevis, Sir Gawain.

A young Sicilian, too, was there;—  
In sight of Etna born and bred,  
Some breath of its volcanic air

Was glowing in his heart and brain,  
And, being rebellious to his liege,  
After Palermo's fatal siege,  
Across the western seas he fled,  
In good King Bomba's happy reign.  
His face was like a summer night,  
All flooded with a dusky light;  
His hands were small; his teeth shone white  
As sea-shells, when he smiled or spoke;  
His sinews supple and strong as oak;  
Clean shaven was he as a priest,  
Who at the mass on Sunday sings,  
Save that upon his upper lip  
His beard, a good palm's length at least,  
Level and pointed at the tip,  
Shot sideways, like a swallow's wings.  
The poets read he o'er and o'er,  
And most of all the Immortal Four  
Of Italy; and next to those,  
The story-telling bard of prose,  
Who wrote the joyous Tuscan tales  
Of the Decameron, that make  
Fiesole's green hills and vales  
Remembered for Boccaccio's sake.  
Much too of music was his thought;  
The melodies and measures fraught  
With sunshine and the open air,  
Of vineyards and the singing sea  
Of his beloved Sicily;  
And much it pleased him to peruse  
The songs of the Sicilian muse,—  
Bucolic songs by Meli sung  
In the familiar peasant tongue,



That made men say, "Behold! once more  
The pitying gods to earth restore  
Theocritus of Syracuse!"

A Spanish Jew from Alicant  
With aspect grand and grave was there;  
Vender of silks and fabrics rare,  
And attar of rose from the Levant.  
Like an old Patriarch he appeared,  
Abraham or Isaac, or at least  
Some later Prophet or High-Priest;  
With lustrous eyes, and olive skin,  
And, wildly tossed from cheeks and chin,  
The tumbling cataract of his beard.  
His garments breathed a spicy scent  
Of cinnamon and sandal blent,  
Like the soft aromatic gales  
That meet the mariner, who sails  
Through the Moluccas, and the seas  
That wash the shores of Celebes.  
All stories that recorded are  
By Pierre Alphonse he knew by heart,  
And it was rumored he could say  
The Parables of Sandabar,  
And all the Fables of Pilpay,  
Or if not all, the greater part.  
Well versed was he in Hebrew books,  
Talmud and Targum, and the lore  
Of Kabala; and evermore  
There was a mystery in his looks;  
His eyes seemed gazing far away,  
As if in vision or in trance

He heard the solemn sackbut play,  
And saw the Jewish maidens dance.

A Theologian, from the school  
Of Cambridge on the Charles, was there;  
Skilful alike with tongue and pen,  
He preached to all men everywhere  
The Gospel of the Golden Rule,  
The New Commandment given to men,  
Thinking the deed, and not the creed,  
Would help us in our utmost need.  
With reverent feet the earth he trod,  
Nor banished nature from his plan,  
But studied still with deep research  
To build the Universal Church,  
Lofty as is the love of God,  
And ample as the wants of man.

A Poet, too, was there, whose verse  
Was tender, musical, and terse;  
The inspiration, the delight,  
The gleam, the glory, the swift flight,  
Of thoughts so sudden, that they seem  
The revelations of a dream,  
All these were his; but with them came  
No envy of another's fame;  
He did not find his sleep less sweet  
For music in some neighboring street,  
Nor rustling hear in every breeze  
The laurels of Miltiades.  
Honor and blessings on his head  
While living, good report when dead,

Who, not too eager for renown,  
Accepts, but does not clutch, the crown!

Last the Musician, as he stood  
Illumed by that fire of wood;  
Fair-haired, blue-eyed, his aspect blithe,  
His figure tall and straight and lithe,  
And every feature of his face  
Revealing his Norwegian race;  
A radiance, streaming from within,  
Around his eyes and forehead beamed,  
The Angel with the violin,  
Painted by Raphael, he seemed.  
He lived in that ideal world  
Whose language is not speech, but song;  
Around him evermore the throng  
Of elves and sprites their dances whirled;  
The Strömkarl sang, the cataract hurled  
Its headlong waters from the height;  
And mingled in the wild delight  
The scream of sea-birds in their flight,  
The rumor of the forest trees,  
The plunge of the implacable seas,  
The tumult of the wind at night,  
Voices of eld, like trumpets blowing,  
Old ballads, and wild melodies  
Through mist and darkness pouring forth,  
Like Elivagar's river flowing  
Out of the glaciers of the North.

The instrument on which he played  
Was in Cremona's workshops made,

By a great master of the past,  
Ere yet was lost the art divine;  
Fashioned of maple and of pine,  
That in Tyrolian forests vast  
Had rocked and wrestled with the blast:  
Exquisite was it in design,  
A marvel of the lutist's art,  
Perfect in each minutest part;  
And in its hollow chamber, thus,  
The maker from whose hands it came  
Had written his unrivalled name,—  
"Antonius Stradivarius."

And when he played, the atmosphere  
Was filled with magic, and the ear  
Caught echoes of that Harp of Gold,  
Whose music had so weird a sound,  
The hunted stag forgot to bound,  
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,  
The birds came down from bush and tree,  
The dead came from beneath the sea,  
The maiden to the harper's knee!

The music ceased; the applause was loud,  
The pleased musician smiled and bowed;  
The wood-fire clapped its hands of flame,  
The shadows on the wainscot stirred,  
And from the harpsichord there came  
A ghostly murmur of acclaim,  
A sound like that sent down at night  
By birds of passage in their flight,  
From the remotest distance heard.

Then silence followed; then began  
A clamor for the Landlord's tale,—  
The story promised them of old,  
They said, but always left untold;  
And he, although a bashful man,  
And all his courage seemed to fail,  
Finding excuse of no avail,  
Yielded; and thus the story ran.

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THE LANDLORD'S TALE.

## PAUL REVERE'S RIDE.

LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,  
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;  
Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march  
By land or sea from the town to-night,  
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch  
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—  
One; if by land, and two, if by sea;  
And I on the opposite shore will be,  
Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
The Somerset, British man-of-war;  
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar  
Across the moon like a prison bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,  
Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,  
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

'Then he climbed to the tower of the church,  
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the sombre rafters, that round him made  
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—  
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town,  
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,

The watchful night-wind, as it went  
Creeping along from tent to tent,  
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"  
A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread  
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent  
On a shadowy something far away,  
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—  
A line of black that bends and floats  
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
Now he patted his horse's side,  
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,  
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,  
As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.  
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height  
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,  
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,  
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,  
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing a spark  
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;

That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,  
The fate of a nation was riding that night;  
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,  
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.  
He has left the village and mounted the steep,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.  
He heard the crowing of the cock,  
And the barking of the farmer's dog,  
And felt the damp of the river fog,  
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,  
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.  
He heard the bleating of the flock,  
And the twitter of birds among the trees,  
And felt the breath of the morning breeze  
Blowing over the meadows brown



And one was safe and asleep in his bed  
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,  
Who that day would be lying dead,  
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,  
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—  
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,  
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,  
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again  
Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm,—  
A cry of defiance and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

---

## INTERLUDE.

THE Landlord ended thus his tale,  
Then rising took down from its nail  
The sword that hung there, dim with dust,  
And cleaving to its sheath with rust,  
And said, "This sword was in the fight."  
The Poet seized it, and exclaimed,  
"It is the sword of a good knight,  
Though homespun was his coat-of-mail;  
What matter if it be not named  
Joyeuse, Colada, Durindale,  
Excalibar, or Aroundight,  
Or other name the books record?  
Your ancestor, who bore this sword  
As Colonel of the Volunteers,  
Mounted upon his old gray mare,  
Seen here and there and everywhere,  
To me a grander shape appears  
Than old Sir William, or what not,  
Clinking about in foreign lands  
With iron gauntlets on his hands,  
And on his head an iron pot!"

All laughed; the Landlord's face grew red  
As his escutcheon on the wall;  
He could not comprehend at all  
The drift of what the Poet said;  
For those who had been longest dead

Were always greatest in his eyes;  
And he was speechless with surprise  
To see Sir William's plumed head  
Brought to a level with the rest,  
And made the subject of a jest.

And this perceiving, to appease  
The Landlord's wrath, the others' fears,  
The Student said, with careless ease,  
"The ladies and the cavaliers,  
The arms, the loves, the courtesies,  
The deeds of high emprise, I sing!  
Thus Ariosto says, in words  
That have the stately stride and ring  
Of armed knights and clashing swords.  
Now listen to the tale I bring;  
Listen! though not to me belong  
The flowing draperies of his song,  
The words that rouse, the voice that charms.  
The Landlord's tale was one of arms,  
Only a tale of love is mine,  
Blending the human and divine,  
A tale of the Decameron, told  
In Palmieri's garden old,  
By Fiametta, laurel-crowned,  
While her companions lay around,  
And heard the intermingled sound  
Of airs that on their errands sped,  
And wild birds gossiping overhead,  
And lisp of leaves, and fountain's fall,  
And her own voice more sweet than all,  
Telling the tale, which, wanting these,  
Perchance may lose its power to please."

## THE STUDENT'S TALE.

## THE FALCON OF SER FEDERIGO.

ONE summer morning, when the sun was hot,  
Weary with labor in his garden-plot,  
On a rude bench beneath his cottage eaves,  
Ser Federigo sat among the leaves  
Of a huge vine, that, with its arms outspread,  
Hung its delicious clusters overhead.  
Below him, through the lovely valley, flowed  
The river Arno, like a winding road,  
And from its banks were lifted high in air  
The spires and roofs of Florence called the Fair;  
To him a marble tomb, that rose above  
His wasted fortunes and his buried love.  
For there, in banquet and in tournament,  
His wealth had lavished been, his substance spent,  
To woo and lose, since ill his wooing sped,  
Monna Giovanna, who his rival wed,  
Yet ever in his fancy reigned supreme,  
The ideal woman of a young man's dream.

Then he withdrew, in poverty and pain,  
To this small farm, the last of his domain,  
His only comfort and his only care  
To prune his vines, and plant the fig and pear;  
His only forester and only guest  
His falcon, faithful to him, when the rest,  
Whose willing hands had found so light of yore  
The brazen knocker of his palace door,

Had now no strength to lift the wooden latch,  
That entrance gave beneath a roof of thatch.  
Companion of his solitary ways,  
Purveyor of his feasts on holidays,  
On him this melancholy man bestowed  
The love with which his nature overflowed.  
And so the empty-handed years went round,  
Vacant, though voiceful with prophetic sound,  
And so, that summer morn, he sat and mused  
With folded, patient hands, as he was used,  
And dreamily before his half-closed sight  
Floated the vision of his lost delight.  
Beside him, motionless, the drowsy bird  
Dreamed of the chase, and in his slumber heard  
The sudden, scythe-like sweep of wings, that dare  
The headlong plunge thro' eddying gulfs of air,  
Then, starting broad awake upon his perch,  
Tinkled his bells, like mass-bells in a church,  
And, looking at his master, seemed to say,  
"Ser Federigo, shall we hunt to-day?"

Ser Federigo thought not of the chase;  
The tender vision of her lovely face,  
I will not say he seems to see, he sees  
In the leaf-shadows of the trellises,  
Herself, yet not herself; a lovely child  
With flowing tresses, and eyes wide and wild,  
Coming undaunted up the garden walk,  
And looking not at him, but at the hawk.  
"Beautiful falcon!" said he, "would that I  
Might hold thee on my wrist, or see thee fly!"  
The voice was hers, and made strange echoes start  
Through all the haunted chambers of his heart,

As an æolian harp through gusty doors  
Of some old ruin its wild music pours.

"Who is thy mother, my fair boy?" he said,  
His hand laid softly on that shining head.  
"Monna Giovanna.—Will you let me stay  
A little while, and with your falcon play?  
We live there, just beyond your garden wall,  
In the great house behind the poplars tall."

So he spake on; and Federigo heard  
As from afar each softly uttered word,  
And drifted onward through the golden gleams  
And shadows of the misty sea of dreams,  
As mariners becalmed through vapors drift,  
And feel the sea beneath them sink and lift,  
And hear far off the mournful breakers roar,  
And voices calling faintly from the shore!  
Then, waking from his pleasant reveries,  
He took the little boy upon his knees,  
And told him stories of his gallant bird,  
Till in their friendship he became a third.

Monna Giovanna, widowed in her prime,  
Had come with friends to pass the summer time  
In her grand villa, half-way up the hill,  
O'erlooking Florence, but retired and still;  
With iron gates, that opened through long lines  
Of sacred ilex and centennial pines,  
And terraced gardens, and broad steps of stone  
And sylvan deities, with moss o'ergrown,  
And fountains palpitating in the heat,  
And all Val d'Arno stretched beneath its feet.

Here in seclusion, as a widow may,  
The lovely lady whiled the hours away,  
Pacing in sable robes the statued hall,  
Herself the stateliest statue among all,  
And seeing more and more, with secret joy,  
Her husband risen and living in her boy,  
Till the lost sense of life returned again,  
Not as delight, but as relief from pain.  
Meanwhile the boy, rejoicing in his strength,  
Stormed down the terraces from length to length;  
The screaming peacock chased in hot pursuit,  
And climbed the garden trellises for fruit.  
But his chief pastime was to watch the flight  
Of a gerfalcon, soaring into sight,  
Beyond the trees that fringed the garden wall,  
Then downward stooping at some distant call;  
And as he gazed full often wondered he  
Who might the master of the falcon be,  
Until that happy morning, when he found  
Master and falcon in the cottage ground.  
And now a shadow and a terror fell  
On the great house, as if a passing-bell  
Tolled from the tower, and filled each spacious room  
With secret awe, and preternatural gloom;  
The petted boy grew ill, and day by day  
Pined with mysterious malady away.  
The mother's heart would not be comforted;  
Her darling seemed to her already dead,  
And often, sitting by the sufferer's side,  
"What can I do to comfort thee?" she cried.  
At first the silent lips made no reply,  
But, moved at length by her importunate cry,

"Give me," he answered, with imploring tone,  
"Ser Federigo's falcon for my own!"

No answer could the astonished mother make;  
How could she ask, e'en for her darling's sake,  
Such favor at a luckless lover's hand,  
Well knowing that to ask was to command?  
Well knowing, what all falconers confessed,  
In all the land that falcon was the best,  
The master's pride and passion and delight,  
And the sole pursuivant of this poor knight.  
But yet, for her child's sake, she could no less  
Than give assent, to soothe his restlessness,  
So promised, and then promising to keep  
Her promise sacred, saw him fall asleep.

The morrow was a bright September morn;  
The earth was beautiful as if new-born;  
There was that nameless splendor everywhere,  
That wild exhilaration in the air,  
Which makes the passers in the city street  
Congratulate each other as they meet.  
Two lovely ladies, clothed in cloak and hood,  
Passed through the garden gate into the wood,  
Under the lustrous leaves, and through the sheen  
Of dewy sunshine showering down between.  
The one, close-hooded, had the attractive grace  
Which sorrow sometimes lends a woman's face;  
Her dark eyes moistened with the mists that roll  
From the gulf-stream of passion in the soul;  
The other with her hood thrown back, her hair  
Making a golden glory in the air,



Her cheeks suffused with an auroral blush,  
Her young heart singing louder than the thrush.  
So walked, that morn, through mingled light and shade,  
Each by the other's presence lovelier made,  
Monna Giovanna and her bosom friend,  
Intent upon their errand and its end.

They found Ser Federigo at his toil,  
Like banished Adam, delving in the soil;  
And when he looked and these fair women spied,  
The garden suddenly was glorified;  
His long-lost Eden was restored again,  
And the strange river winding through the plain  
No longer was the Arno to his eyes,  
But the Euphrates watering Paradise!

Monna Giovanna raised her stately head,  
And with fair words of salutation said:  
"Ser Federigo, we come here as friends,  
Hoping in this to make some poor amends  
For past unkindness. I who ne'er before  
Would even cross the threshold of your door,  
I who in happier days such pride maintained,  
Refused your banquets, and your gifts disdained,  
This morning come, a self-invited guest,  
To put your generous nature to the test,  
And breakfast with you under your own vine."  
To which he answered: "Poor desert of mine,  
Not your unkindness call it, for if aught  
Is good in me of feeling or of thought,  
From you it comes, and this last grace outweighs  
All sorrows, all regrets of other days."

And after further compliment and talk,  
Among the dahlias in the garden walk  
He left his guests; and to his cottage turned,  
And as he entered for a moment yearned  
For the lost splendors of the days of old,  
The ruby glass, the silver and the gold,  
And felt how piercing is the sting of pride,  
By want embittered and intensified.  
He looked about him for some means or way  
To keep this unexpected holiday;  
Searched every cupboard, and then searched again,  
Summoned the maid, who came, but came in vain;  
"The Signor did not hunt to-day," she said,  
"There's nothing in the house but wine and bread."  
Then suddenly the drowsy falcon shook  
His little bells, with that sagacious look,  
Which said, as plain as language to the ear,  
"If anything is wanting, I am here!"  
Yes, everything is wanting, gallant bird!  
The master seized thee without further word,  
Like thine own lure, he whirled thee round; ah me!  
The pomp and flutter of brave falconry,  
The bells, the jesses, the bright scarlet hood,  
The flight and the pursuit o'er field and wood,  
All these forevermore are ended now;  
No longer victor, but the victim thou!

Then on the board a snow-white cloth he spread,  
Laid on its wooden dish the loaf of bread,  
Brought purple grapes with autumn sunshine hot,  
The fragrant peach, the juicy bergamot;  
Then in the midst a flask of wine he placed,  
And with autumnal flowers the banquet graced.

Ser Federigo, would not these suffice  
Without thy falcon stuffed with cloves and spice?

When all was ready, and the courtly dame  
With her companion to the cottage came,  
Upon Ser Federigo's brain there fell  
The wild enchantment of a magic spell;  
The room they entered, mean and low and small,  
Was changed into a sumptuous banquet-hall,  
With fanfares by aerial trumpets blown;  
The rustic chair she sat on was a throne;  
He ate celestial food, and a divine  
Flavor was given to his country wine,  
And the poor falcon, fragrant with his spice,  
A peacock was, or bird of paradise!

When the repast was ended, they arose  
And passed again into the garden-close.  
Then said the lady, "Far too well I know,  
Remembering still the days of long ago,  
Though you betray it not, with what surprise  
You see me here in this familiar wise.  
You have no children, and you cannot guess  
What anguish, what unspeakable distress  
A mother feels, whose child is lying ill,  
Nor how her heart anticipates his will.  
And yet for this, you see me lay aside  
All womanly reserve and check of pride,  
And ask the thing most precious in your sight,  
Your falcon, your sole comfort and delight,  
Which if you find it in your heart to give,  
My poor, unhappy boy perchance may live."

Ser Federigo listens, and replies,  
With tears of love and pity in his eyes:  
"Alas, dear lady! there can be no task  
So sweet to me, as giving when you ask.  
One little hour ago, if I had known  
This wish of yours, it would have been my own.  
But thinking in what manner I could best  
Do honor to the presence of my guest,  
I deemed that nothing worthier could be  
Than what most dear and precious was to me,  
And so my gallant falcon breathed his last  
To furnish forth this morning our repast."

In mute contrition, mingled with dismay,  
The gentle lady turned her eyes away,  
Grieving that he such sacrifice should make,  
And kill his falcon for a woman's sake,  
Yet feeling in her heart a woman's pride,  
That nothing she could ask for was denied;  
Then took her leave, and passed out at the gate  
With footstep slow and soul disconsolate.

Three days went by, and lo! a passing-bell  
Tolled from the little chapel in the dell;  
Ten strokes Ser Federigo heard, and said,  
Breathing a prayer, "Alas! her child is dead!"  
Three months went by; and lo! a merrier chime  
Rang from the chapel bells at Christmas time;  
The cottage was deserted, and no more  
Ser Federigo sat beside its door,  
But now, with servitors to do his will,  
In the grand villa, half-way up the hill,

Sat at the Christmas feast, and at his side  
Monna Giovanna, his beloved bride,  
Never so beautiful, so kind, so fair,  
Enthroned once more in the old rustic chair,  
High-perched upon the back of which there stood  
The image of a falcon carved in wood,  
And underneath the inscription, with a date,  
"All things come round to him who will but wait."

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## INTERLUDE.

Soon as the story reached its end,  
One, over eager to commend,  
Crowned it with injudicious praise;  
And then the voice of blame found vent,  
And fanned the embers of dissent  
Into a somewhat lively blaze.

The Theologian shook his head;  
"These old Italian tales," he said,  
"From the much-praised Decameron down  
Through all the rabble of the rest,  
Are either trifling, dull, or lewd;  
The gossip of a neighborhood  
In some remote provincial town,  
A scandalous chronicle at best!  
They seem to me a stagnant fen,  
Grown rank with rushes and with reeds,  
Where a white lily, now and then,  
Blooms in the midst of noxious weeds  
And deadly nightshade on its banks."

To this the Student straight replied,  
"For the white lily, many thanks!  
One should not say, with too much pride,  
Fountain, I will not drink of thee!  
Nor were it grateful to forget,  
That from these reservoirs and tanks  
Even imperial Shakspeare drew  
His Moor of Venice and the Jew,  
And Romeo and Juliet,  
And many a famous comedy."

Then a long pause; till some one said,  
"An Angel is flying overhead!"  
At these words spake the Spanish Jew,  
And murmured with an inward breath:  
"God grant, if what you say is true  
It may not be the Angel of Death!"

And then another pause; and then,  
Stroking his beard, he said again:  
"This brings back to my memory  
A story in the Talmud told,  
That book of gems, that book of gold,  
Of wonders many and manifold,  
A tale that often comes to me,  
And fills my heart, and haunts my brain;  
Which if you list to hear, behold."

## THE SPANISH JEW'S TALE.

## THE LEGEND OF RABBI BEN LEVI.

RABBI Ben Levi, on the Sabbath, read  
A volume of the Law, in which it said,  
“No man shall look upon my face and live.”  
And as he read, he prayed that God would give  
His faithful servant grace with mortal eye  
To look upon His face and yet not die.

Then fell a sudden shadow on the page  
And, lifting up his eyes, grown dim with age,  
He saw the Angel of Death before him stand,  
Holding a naked sword in his right hand.  
Rabbi Ben Levi was a righteous man,  
Yet through his veins a chill of terror ran.

With trembling voice he said, “What wilt thou here?  
The angel answered, “Lo! the time draws near  
When thou must die; yet first, by God's decree,  
Whate'er thou askest shall be granted thee.”  
Replied the Rabbi, “Let these living eyes  
First look upon my place in Paradise.”

Then said the Angel, “Come with me and look.”  
Rabbi Ben Levi closed the sacred book,  
And rising, and uplifting his gray head,  
“Give me thy sword,” he to the Angel said,  
“Lest thou shouldst fall upon me by the way.”  
The Angel smiled and hastened to obey,

Then led him forth to the Celestial Town,  
And set him on the wall, whence, gazing down,  
Rabbi Ben Levi, with his living eyes,  
Might look upon his place in Paradise.

Then straight into the city of the Lord  
The Rabbi leaped with the Death-Angel's sword,  
And through the streets there swept a sudden breath  
Of something there unknown, which men call death.  
Meanwhile the Angel stayed without, and cried,  
"Come back!" To which the Rabbi's voice replied,  
"No! in the name of God, whom I adore,  
I swear that hence I will depart no more!"

Then all the Angels cried, "O Holy One,  
See what the son of Levi here has done!  
The kingdom of Heaven he takes by violence,  
And in Thy name refuses to go hence!"  
The Lord replied, "My Angels, be not wroth  
Did e'er the son of Levi break his oath?  
Let him remain; for he with mortal eye  
Shall look upon my face and yet not die."

Beyond the outer wall the Angel of Death  
Heard the great voice, and said, with panting breath,  
"Give back the sword, and let me go my way."  
Whereat the Rabbi paused, and answered, "Nay!  
Anguish enough already has it caused  
Among the sons of men." And while he paused  
He heard the awful mandate of the Lord  
Resounding through the air, "Give back the sword!"

The Rabbi bowed his head in silent prayer;  
Then said he to the dreadful Angel, "Swear,



No human eye shall look on it again;  
But when thou takest away the souls of men,  
Thyself unseen, and with an unseen sword,  
Thou wilt perform the bidding of the Lord."

The Angel took the sword again, and swore,  
And walks on earth unseen forevermore.

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## INTERLUDE.

He ended: and a kind of spell  
Upon the silent listeners fell.  
His solemn manner and his words  
Had touched the deep, mysterious chords,  
That vibrate in each human breast  
Alike, but not alike confessed.  
The spiritual world seemed near;  
And close above them, full of fear,  
Its awful adumbration passed,  
A luminous shadow, vague and vast.  
They almost feared to look, lest there,  
Embodied from the impalpable air,  
They might behold the Angel stand,  
Holding the sword in his right hand.  
At last, but in a voice subdued,  
Not to disturb their dreamy mood,  
Said the Sicilian: "While you spoke,  
Telling your legend marvellous,  
Suddenly in my memory woke

The thought of one, now gone from us,—  
An old Abate, meek and mild,  
My friend and teacher, when a child,  
Who sometimes in those days of old  
The legend of an Angel told,  
Which ran, if I remember, thus."

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## THE SICILIAN'S TALE.

### KING ROBERT OF SICILY.

ROBERT of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane  
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,  
Apparelled in magnificent attire,  
With retinue of many a knight and squire,  
On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat  
And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.  
And as he listened, o'er and o'er again  
Repeated, like a burden or refrain,  
He caught the words, "*Deposuit potentes  
De sede, et exaltavit humiles*";  
And slowly lifting up his kingly head  
He to a learned clerk beside him said,  
"What mean these words?" The clerk made answer meet,  
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,  
And has exalted them of low degree."  
Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,  
"T is well that such seditious words are sung  
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;

For unto priests and people be it known,  
There is no power can push me from my throne!"  
And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,  
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;  
The church was empty, and there was no light,  
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,  
Lighted a little space before some saint.  
He started from his seat and gazed around,  
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.  
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;  
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,  
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,  
And imprecations upon men and saints.  
The sounds re-echoed from the roof and walls  
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls!

At length the sexton, hearing from without  
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,  
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,  
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"  
Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,  
"Open: 't is I, the King! Art thou afraid?"  
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,  
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!"  
Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;  
A man rushed by him at a single stride,  
Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak,  
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,  
But leaped into the blackness of the night,  
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane  
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,  
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,  
Bare-headed, breathless, and besprent with mire,  
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,  
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;  
Rushed through the court-yard, thrusting in his rage  
To right and left each seneschal and page,  
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,  
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.  
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;  
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,  
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,  
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king,  
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,  
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,  
But all transfigured with angelic light!  
It was an Angel; and his presence there  
With a divine effulgence filled the air,  
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,  
Though none the hidden Angel recognize.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,  
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,  
Who met his looks of anger and surprise  
With the divine compassion of his eyes;  
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?"  
To which King Robert answered, with a sneer,  
"I am the King, and come to claim my own  
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"

And suddenly, at these audacious words,  
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;  
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,  
"Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou  
Henceforth shalt wear the bells and scalloped cape,  
And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;  
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,  
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,  
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;  
A group of tittering pages ran before,  
And as they opened wide the folding-door,  
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,  
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,  
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring  
With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"  
Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,  
He said within himself, "It was a dream!"  
But the straw rustled as he turned his head,  
There were the cap and bells beside his bed  
Around him rose the bare, discolored walls,  
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,  
And in the corner, a revolting shape,  
Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape.  
It was no dream; the world he loved so much  
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again  
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;  
Under the Angel's governance benign  
The happy island danced with corn and wine,

And deep within the mountain's burning breast  
Enceladus, the giant, was at rest.  
Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,  
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.  
Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,  
With looks bewildered and a vacant stare,  
Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,  
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,  
His only friend the ape, his only food  
What others left,—he still was unsubdued.  
And when the Angel met him on his way,  
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,  
Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel  
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,  
"Art thou the King?" the passion of his woe  
Burst from him in resistless overflow,  
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling  
The haughty answer back, "I am, I am the King!"

Almost three years were ended; when there came  
Ambassadors of great repute and name  
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,  
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane  
By letter summoned them forthwith to come  
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.  
The Angel with great joy received his guests,  
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,  
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,  
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.  
Then he departed with them o'er the sea  
Into the lovely land of Italy,  
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made  
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,

With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir  
Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.

And lo! among the menials, in mock state,  
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,  
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,  
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,  
King Robert rode, making huge merriment  
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp, and blare  
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,  
Giving his benediction and embrace,  
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.  
While with congratulations and with prayers  
He entertained the Angel unawares,  
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,  
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,  
"I am the King! Look, and behold in me  
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!  
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,  
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.  
Do you not know me? does no voice within  
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?"  
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,  
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;  
The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport  
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!"  
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace  
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,  
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky;

The presence of the Angel, with its light,  
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,  
And with new fervor filled the hearts of men,  
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.  
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,  
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendor saw,  
He felt within a power unfelt before,  
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,  
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord  
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more  
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,  
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again  
The land was made resplendent with his train,  
Flashing along the towns of Italy  
Unto Salerno, and from there by sea.  
And when once more within Palermo's wall,  
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,  
He heard the Angelus from convent towers,  
As if the better world conversed with ours,  
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,  
And with a gesture bade the rest retire;  
And when they were alone, the Angel said,  
"Art thou the King?" Then bowing down his head,  
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,  
And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best!  
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,  
And in some cloister's school of penitence,  
Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,  
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul is shriven!"  
The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face  
A holy light illumined all the place,



And through the open window, loud and clear,  
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,  
Above the stir and tumult of the street:  
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,  
And has exalted them of low degree!"  
And through the chant a second melody  
Rose like the throbbing of a single string:  
"I am an Angel, and thou art the King!"

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,  
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!  
But all apparelled as in days of old,  
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;  
And when his courtiers came, they found him there  
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

---

## INTERLUDE.

AND then the blue-eyed Norseman told  
A Saga of the days of old.  
"There is," said he, "a wondrous book  
Of Legends in the old Norse tongue,  
Of the dead kings of Norroway,—  
Legends that once were told or sung  
In many a smoky fireside nook  
Of Iceland, in the ancient day,  
By wandering Saga-man or Scald;  
Heimskringla is the volume called;  
And he who looks may find therein  
The story that I now begin."

And in each pause the story made  
Upon his violin he played,  
As an appropriate interlude,  
Fragments of old Norwegian tunes  
That bound in one the separate runes,  
And held the mind in perfect mood,  
Entwining and encircling all  
The strange and antiquated rhymes  
With melodies of olden times;  
As over some half-ruined wall,  
Disjointed and about to fall,  
Fresh woodbines climb and interlace,  
And keep the loosened stones in place

---

## THE MUSICIAN'S TALE.

## THE SAGA OF KING OLAF.

## I.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THOR.

I AM the God Thor,  
I am the War-God,  
I am the Thunderer!  
Here in my Northland,  
My fastness and fortress,  
Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs  
Rule I the nations;  
This is my hammer,  
Mjölnir the mighty  
Giants and sorcerers  
Cannot withstand it!

These are the gauntlets  
Wherewith I wield it,  
And hurl it afar off;  
This is my girdle;  
Whenever I brace it,  
Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest  
Stream through the heavens,  
In flashes of crimson,  
Is but my red beard  
Blown by the night-wind,  
Affrighting the nations!

Jove is my brother;  
Mine eyes are the lightning;  
The wheels of my chariot  
Roll in the thunder,  
The blows of my hammer  
Ring in the earthquake!

Force rules the world still,  
Has ruled it, shall rule it;  
Meekness is weakness,  
Strength is triumphant,  
Over the whole earth  
Still is it Thor's-Day!

Thou art a God too,  
O Galilean!  
And thus single-handed  
Unto the combat,  
Gauntlet or Gospel,  
Here I defy thee

---

## II.

## KING OLAF'S RETURN.

AND King Olaf heard the cry,  
Saw the red light in the sky,  
Laid his hand upon his sword,  
As he leaned upon the railing,  
And his ships went sailing, sailing  
Northward into Drontheim fiord.

There he stood as one who dreamed;  
And the red light glanced and gleamed  
On the armor that he wore;  
And he shouted, as the rifted  
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,  
"I accept thy challenge, Thor!"

To avenge his father slain,  
And reconquer realm and reign,  
Came the youthful Olaf home,  
Through the midnight sailing, sailing,  
Listening to the wild wind's wailing,  
And the dashing of the foam.

To his thoughts the sacred name  
Of his mother Astrid came,  
And the tale she oft had told  
Of her flight by secret passes  
Through the mountains and morasses,  
To the home of Hakon old.

Then strange memories crowded back  
Of Queen Gunhild's wrath and wrack,  
And a hurried flight by sea;  
Of grim Vikings, and their rapture  
In the sea-fight, and the capture,  
And the life of slavery.

How a stranger watched his face  
In the Esthonian market-place,  
Scanned his features one by one,  
Saying, "We should know each other;  
I am Sigurd, Astrid's brother,  
Thou art Olaf, Astrid's son!"

Then as Queen Allogia's page,  
Old in honors, young in age,  
Chief of all her men-at-arms;  
Till vague whispers, and mysterious,  
Reached King Valdemar, the imperious,  
Filling him with strange alarms.

Then his cruisings o'er the seas,  
Westward to the Hebrides,  
And to Scilly's rocky shore;  
And the hermit's cavern dismal,  
Christ's great name and rites baptismal,  
In the ocean's rush and roar.

All these thoughts of love and strife  
Glimmered through his lurid life,  
As the stars' intenser light  
Through the red flames o'er him trailing,  
As his ships went sailing, sailing,  
Northward in the summer night.

Trained for either camp or court,  
Skilful in each manly sport,  
    Young and beautiful and tall;  
Art of warfare, craft of chases,  
Swimming, skating, snow-shoe races,  
    Excellent alike in all.

When at sea, with all his rowers,  
He along the bending oars  
    Outside of his ship could run.  
He the Smalsor Horn ascended,  
And his shining shield suspended  
    On its summit, like a sun.

On the ship-rails he could stand,  
Wield his sword with either hand,  
    And at once two javelins throw;  
At all feasts where ale was strongest  
Sat the merry monarch longest,  
    First to come and last to go.

Norway never yet had seen  
One so beautiful of mien,  
    One so royal in attire,  
When in arms completely furnished,  
Harness gold-inlaid and burnished,  
    Mantle like a flame of fire.

Thus came Olaf to his own,  
When upon the night-wind blown  
    Passed that cry along the shore;  
And he answered, while the rifted  
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,  
    "I accept thy challenge, Thor!"

## III.

## THORA OF RIMOL.

"THORA of Rimol! hide me! hide me!  
Danger and shame and death betide me!  
For Olaf the King is hunting me down  
Through field and forest, through thorp and town!"  
Thus cried Jarl Hakon  
To Thora, the fairest of women.

"Hakon Jarl! for the love I bear thee  
Neither shall shame nor death come near thee!  
But the hiding-place wherein thou must lie  
Is the cave underneath the swine in the sty."  
Thus to Jarl Hakon  
Said Thora, the fairest of women.

So Hakon Jarl and his base thrall Karker  
Crouched in the cave, than a dungeon darker,  
As Olaf came riding, with men in mail,  
Through the forest roads into Orkadale,  
Demanding Jark Hakon  
Of Thora, the fairest of women.

"Rich and honored shall be whoever  
The head of Hakon Jarl shall dissever!"  
Hakon heard him, and Karker the slave,  
Through the breathing-holes of the darksome cave.  
Alone in her chamber  
Wept Thora, the fairest of women.



Said Karker, the crafty, "I will not slay thee!  
For all the king's gold I will never betray thee!"  
"Then why dost thou turn so pale, O churl,  
And then again black as the earth?" said the Earl.  
More pale and more faithful  
Was Thora, the fairest of women.

From a dream in the night the thrall started, saying,  
"Round my neck a gold ring King Olaf was laying!"  
And Hakon answered, "Beware of the king!  
He will lay round thy neck a blood-red ring."  
At the ring on her finger  
Gazed Thora, the fairest of women.

At daybreak slept Hakon, with sorrows encumbered,  
But screamed and drew up his feet as he slumbered;  
The thrall in the darkness plunged with his knife,  
And the Earl awakened no more in this life.  
But wakeful and weeping  
Sat Thora, the fairest of women.

At Nidarholm the priests are all singing,  
Two ghastly heads on the gibbet are swinging;  
One is Jarl Hakon's and one is his thrall's,  
And the people are shouting from windows and walls;  
While alone in her chamber  
Swoons Thora, the fairest of women.

## IV.

## QUEEN SIGRID THE HAUGHTY.

QUEEN Sigrid the Haughty sat proud and aloft  
In her chamber, that looked over meadow and croft.

Heart's dearest,  
Why dost thou sorrow so?

The floor with tassels of fir was besprent,  
Filling the room with their fragrant scent.

She heard the birds sing, she saw the sun shine,  
The air of summer was sweeter than wine.

Like a sword without scabbard the bright river lay  
Between her own kingdom and Norrøway.

But Olaf the King had sued for her hand,  
The sword would be sheathed, the river be spanned.

Her maidens were seated around her knee,  
Working bright figures in tapestry.

And one was singing the ancient rune  
Of Brynhilda's love and the wrath of Gudrun.

And through it, and round it, and over it all  
Sounded incessant the waterfall.

The Queen in her hand held a ring of gold,  
From the door of Ladé's Temple old.

King Olaf had sent her this wedding gift,  
But her thoughts as arrows were keen and swift.

She had given the ring to her goldsmiths twain,  
Who smiled, as they handed it back again.

And Sigrid the Queen, in her haughty way,  
Said, "Why do you smile, my goldsmiths, say?"

And they answered: "O Queen! if the truth must be told,  
The ring is of copper, and not of gold!"

The lightning flashed o'er her forehead and cheek,  
She only murmured, she did not speak:

"If in his gifts he can faithless be,  
There will be no gold in his love to me."

A footstep was heard on the outer stair,  
And in strode King Olaf with royal air.

He kissed the Queen's hand, and he whispered of love,  
And swore to be true as the stars are above.

But she smiled with contempt as she answered: "O King,  
Will you swear it, as Odin once swore, on the ring?"

And the King: "O speak not of Odin to me,  
The wife of King Olaf a Christian must be."

Looking straight at the King, with her level brows,  
She said, "I keep true to my faith and my vows."

Then the face of King Olaf was darkened with gloom,  
He rose in his anger and strode through the room.

"Why, then, should I care to have thee?" he said,—  
"A faded old woman, a heathenish jade!"

His zeal was stronger than fear or love,  
And he struck the Queen in the face with his glove.

Then forth from the chamber in anger he fled,  
And the wooden stairway shook with his tread.

Queen Sigrid the Haughty said under her breath,  
"This insult, King Olaf, shall be thy death!"  
Heart's dearest,  
Why dost thou sorrow so?

## V.

## THE SKERRY OF SHRIEKS.

Now from all King Olaf's farms  
His men-at-arms  
Gathered on the Eve of Easter;  
To his house at Angvalds-ness  
Fast they press,  
Drinking with the royal feaster.

Loudly through the wide-flung door  
Came the roar  
Of the sea upon the Skerry;  
And it's thunder loud and near  
Reached the ear,  
Mingling with their voices merry.

"Hark!" said Olaf to his Scald,  
    Halfred the Bald,  
"Listen to that song, and learn it!  
Half my kingdom would I give,  
    As I live,  
If by such songs you would earn it!

"For of all the runes and rhymes  
    Of all times,  
Best I like the ocean's dirges,  
When the old harper heaves and rocks,  
    His hoary locks  
Flowing and flashing in the surges!"

Halfred answered: "I am called  
    The Unappalled!  
Nothing hinders me or daunts me.  
Hearken to me, then, O King,  
    While I sing  
The great Ocean Song that haunts me. '

"I will hear your song sublime  
    Some other time,"  
Says the drowsy monarch, yawning,  
And retires; each laughing guest  
    Applauds the jest;  
Then they sleep till day is dawning.

Pacing up and down the yard,  
    King Olaf's guard  
Saw the sea-mist slowly creeping  
O'er the sands, and up the hill,  
    Gathering still  
Round the house where they were sleeping.

It was not the fog he saw,  
Nor misty flaw,  
That above the landscape brooded;  
It was Eyvind Kallda's crew  
Of warlocks blue,  
With their caps of darkness hooded!

Round and round the house they go,  
Weaving slow  
Magic circles to encumber  
And imprison in their ring  
Olaf the King,  
As he helpless lies in slumber.

Then athwart the vapors dun  
The Easter sun  
Streamed with one broad track of splendor!  
In their real forms appeared  
The warlocks weird,  
Awful as the Witch of Endor.

Blinded by the light that glared,  
They groped and stared  
Round about with steps unsteady;  
From his window Olaf gazed,  
And, amazed,  
"Who are these strange people?" said he.

"Eyvind Kallda and his men!"  
Answered then  
From the yard a sturdy farmer;  
While the men-at-arms apace  
Filled the place,  
Busily buckling on their armor.

From the gates they sallied forth,  
    South and north,  
Scoured the island coast around them,  
Seizing all the warlock band,  
    Foot and hand  
On the Skerry's rocks they bound them.

And at eve the king again  
    Called his train,  
And, with all the candles burning,  
Silent sat and heard once more  
    The sullen roar  
Of the ocean tides returning.

Shrieks and cries of wild despair  
    Filled the air,  
Growing fainter as they listened;  
Then the bursting surge alone  
    Sounded on;—  
Thus the sorcerers were christened!

"Sing, O Scald, your song sublime,  
    Your ocean-rhyme,"  
Cried King Olaf: "it will cheer me!"  
Said the Scald, with pallid cheeks,  
    "The Skerry of Shrieks  
Sings too loud for you to hear me!"

## VI.

## THE WRAITH OF ODIN.

THE guests were loud, the ale was strong;  
King Olaf feasted late and long;  
The hoary Scalds together sang;  
O'erhead the smoky rafters rang.

Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The door swung wide, with creak and din  
A blast of cold night-air came in,  
And on the threshold shivering stood  
A one-eyed guest, with cloak and hood.

Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The King exclaimed, "O graybeard pale!  
Come warm thee with this cup of ale."  
The foaming draught the old man quaffed,  
The noisy guests looked on and laughed.

Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Then spake the King: "Be not afraid;  
Sit here by me." The guest obeyed,  
And, seated at the table, told  
Tales of the sea, and Sagas old.

Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

And ever, when the tale was o'er,  
The King demanded yet one more;  
Till Sigurd the Bishop smiling said,  
"T is late, O King, and time for bed."

Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.



The King retired; the stranger guest  
Followed and entered with the rest;  
The lights were out, the pages gone,  
But still the garrulous guest spake on.  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

As one who from a volume reads,  
He spake of heroes and their deeds,  
Of lands and cities he had seen,  
And stormy gulfs that tossed between.  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Then from his lips in music rolled  
The Havamal of Odin old,  
With sounds mysterious as the roar  
Of billows on a distant shore.  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

"Do we not learn from runes and rhymes  
Made by the gods in elder times,  
And do not still the great Scalds teach  
That silence better is than speech?"  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Smiling at this, the King replied,  
"Thy lore is by thy tongue belied;  
For never was I so enthralled  
Either by Saga-man or Scald."  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The Bishop said, "Late hours we keep!  
Night wanes, O King! 't is time for sleep!"

Then slept the King, and when he woke  
The guest was gone, the morning broke.  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

They found the doors securely barred,  
They found the watch-dog in the yard,  
There was no footprint in the grass,  
And none had seen the stranger pass.  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

King Olaf crossed himself and said:  
"I know that Odin the Great is dead;  
Sure is the triumph of our Faith,  
The one-eyed stranger was his wraith."  
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

## VII.

## IRON-BEARD.

OLAF the King, one summer morn,  
Blew a blast on his bugle-horn,  
Sending his signal through the land of Drontheim.

And to the Hus-Ting held at Mere  
Gathered the farmers far and near,  
With their war weapons ready to confront him.

Ploughing under the morning star,  
Old Iron-Beard in Yriar  
Heard the summons, chuckling with a low laugh.

He wiped the sweat-drops from his brow,  
Unharnessed his horses from the plough,  
And clattering came on horseback to King Olaf.

He was the churliest of the churls;  
Little he cared for king or earls;  
Bitter as home-brewed ale were his foaming passions.

Hodden-gray was the garb he wore,  
And by the Hammer of Thor he swore;  
He hated the narrow town, and all its fashions.

But he loved the freedom of his farm,  
His ale at night, by the fireside warm,  
Gudrun his daughter, with her flaxen tresses.

He loved his horses and his herds,  
The smell of the earth, and the song of birds,  
His well-filled barns, his brook with its water-cresses.

Huge and cumbersome was his frame;  
His beard, from which he took his name,  
Frosty and fierce, like that of Hymer the Giant.

So at the Hus-Ting he appeared,  
The farmer of Yriar, Iron-Beard,  
On horseback, with an attitude defiant.

And to King Olaf he cried aloud,  
Out of the middle of the crowd,  
That tossed about him like a stormy ocean:

"Such sacrifices shalt thou bring;  
To Odin and to Thor, O King,  
As other kings have done in their devotion!"

King Olaf answered: "I command  
This land to be a Christian land;  
Here is my Bishop who the folk baptizes!

"But if you ask me to restore  
Your sacrifices, stained with gore,  
Then will I offer human sacrifices!

"Not slaves and peasants shall they be,  
But men of note and high degree,  
Such men as Orm of Lyra and Kar of Gryting!"

Then to their Temple strode he in,  
And loud behind him heard the din  
Of his men-at-arms and the peasants fiercely fighting.

There in the Temple, carved in wood,  
The image of great Odin stood,  
And other gods, with Thor supreme among them.

King Olaf smote them with the blade  
Of his huge war-axe, gold inlaid,  
And downward shattered to the pavement flung them.

At the same moment rose without  
From the contending crowd, a shout,  
A mingled sound of triumph and of wailing.

And there upon the trampled plain  
The farmer Iron-Beard lay slain,  
Midway between the assailed and the assailing.

King Olaf from the doorway spoke:  
"Choose ye between two things, my folk,  
To be baptized or given up to slaughter!"

And seeing their leader stark and dead,  
The people with a murmur said,  
"O King, baptize us with thy holy water!"

So all the Drontheim land became  
A Christian land in name and fame,  
In the old gods no more believing and trusting.

And as a blood-atonement, soon  
King Olaf wed the fair Gudrun;  
And thus in peace ended the Drontheim Hus-Ting!

## VIII.

## GUDRUN.

On King Olaf's bridal night  
Shines the moon with tender light,  
And across the chamber streams  
Its tide of dreams.

At the fatal midnight hour,  
When all evil things have power,  
In the glimmer of the moon  
Stands Gudrun.

Close against her heaving breast,  
Something in her hand is pressed;  
Like an icicle, its sheen  
Is cold and keen.

On the cairn are fixed her eyes  
Where her murdered father lies,  
And a voice remote and drear  
She seems to hear.

What a bridal night is this?  
Cold will be the dagger's kiss;  
Laden with the chill of death  
Is its breath.

Like the drifting snow she sweeps  
To the couch where Olaf sleeps;  
Suddenly he wakes and stirs,  
His eyes meet hers.

"What is that," King Olaf said,  
"Gleams so bright above thy head?  
Wherefore standest thou so white  
In pale moonlight?"

"'Tis the bodkin that I wear  
When at night I bind my hair;  
It woke me falling on the floor;  
'Tis nothing more."

"Forests have ears, and fields have eyes;  
Often treachery lurking lies  
Underneath the fairest hair!  
Gudrun beware!"

Ere the earliest peep of morn  
Blew King Olaf's bugle-horn;  
And forever sundered ride  
Bridegroom and bride!

## IX.

## THANGBRAND THE PRIEST.

SHORT of stature, large of limb,  
Burly face and russet beard,  
All the women stared at him,  
When in Iceland he appeared.  
"Look!" they said,  
With nodding head,  
"There goes Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest."

All the prayers he knew by rote,  
He could preach like Chrysostome,  
From the Fathers he could quote,  
He had even been at Rome.  
A learned clerk,  
A man of mark,  
Was this Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

He was quarrelsome and loud,  
And impatient of control,  
Boisterous in the market crowd,  
Boisterous at the wassail-bowl,  
Everywhere  
Would drink and swear,  
Swaggering Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

In his house this malecontent  
    Could the King no longer bear,  
So to Iceland he was sent  
    To convert the heathen there,  
    And away  
    One summer day  
Sailed this Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

There in Iceland, o'er their books  
    Pored the people day and night,  
But he did not like their looks,  
    Nor the songs they used to write.  
    "All this rhyme  
    Is waste of time!"  
Grumbled Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

To the alehouse, where he sat,  
    Came the Scalds and Saga-men;  
Is it to be wondered at,  
    That they quarrelled now and then,  
    When o'er his beer  
    Began to leer  
Drunken Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest?

All the folk in Alftafjord  
    Boasted of their island grand;  
Saying in a single word,  
    "Iceland is the finest land  
    That the sun  
    Doth shine upon!"  
Loud laughed Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.



And he answered: "What's the use  
Of this bragging up and down,  
When three women and one goose  
Make a market in your town!"  
Every Scald  
Satires scrawled  
On poor Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

Something worse they did than that;  
And what vexed him most of all  
Was a figure in shovel hat,  
Drawn in charcoal on the wall;  
With words that go  
Sprawling below,  
"This is Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest."

Hardly knowing what he did,  
Then he smote them might and main,  
Thorvald Veile and Veterlid  
Lay there in the alehouse slain.  
"To-day we are gold,  
To-morrow mould!"  
Muttered Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

Much in fear of axe and rope,  
Back to Norway sailed he then.  
"O, King Olaf! little hope  
Is there of these Iceland men!"  
Meekly said,  
With bending head,  
Pious Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

## X.

## RAUD THE STRONG.

"ALL the old gods are dead,  
All the wild warlocks fled;  
But the White Christ lives and reigns,  
And throughout my wide domains  
His Gospel shall be spread!"  
On the Evangelists  
Thus swore King Olaf.

But still in dreams of the night  
Beheld he the crimson light,  
And heard the voice that defied  
Him who was crucified  
And challenged him to the fight.  
To Sigurd the Bishop  
King Olaf confessed it.

And Sigurd the Bishop said,  
"The old Gods are not dead,  
For the great Thor still reigns,  
And among the Jarls and Thanes  
The old witchcraft still is spread."  
Thus to King Olaf  
Said Sigurd the Bishop.

"Far north in the Salten Fiord,  
By rapine, fire, and sword,  
Lives the Viking, Raud the Strong;  
All the Godoe Isles belong  
To him and his heathen horde."

Thus went on speaking  
Sigurd the Bishop.

"A warlock, a wizard is he,  
And lord of the wind and the sea;  
And whichever way he sails,  
He has ever favoring gales,  
By his craft in sorcery."

Here the sign of the cross made  
Devoutly King Olaf.

"With rites that we both abhor,  
He worships Odin and Thor;  
So it cannot yet be said,  
That all the old gods are dead,  
And the warlocks are no more,"

Flushing with anger  
Said Sigurd the Bishop.

Then King Olaf cried aloud:  
"I will talk with this mighty Raud,  
And along the Salten Fiord  
Preach the Gospel with my sword,  
Or be brought back in my shroud!"  
So northward from Drontheim  
Sailed King Olaf!

## XI.

## BISHOP SIGURD AT SALTEN FIORD.

LOUD the angry wind was wailing  
As King Olaf's ship came sailing  
Northward out of Drontheim haven  
To the mouth of Salten Fiord.

Though the flying sea-spray drenches  
Fore and aft the rowers' benches,  
Not a single heart is craven  
Of the champions there on board.

All without the Fiord was quiet,  
But within it storm and riot,  
Such as on his Viking cruises  
Raud the Strong was wont to ride.

And the sea through all its tide-ways  
Swept the reeling vessels sideways,  
As the leaves are swept through sluices,  
When the flood-gates open wide.

"'T is the warlock! 't is the demon  
Raud!" cried Sigurd to the seamen;  
"But the Lord is not affrighted  
By the 'witchcraft of his foes."

To the ship's bow he ascended,  
By his choristers attended,  
Round him were the tapers lighted,  
And the sacred incense rose.

On the bow stood Bishop Sigurd,  
In his robes, as one transfigured,  
And the Crucifix he planted  
High amid the rain and mist.

Then with holy water sprinkled  
All the ship; the mass-bells tinkled;  
Loud the monks around him chanted,  
Loud he read the Evangelist.

As into the Fiord they darted,  
On each side the water parted;  
Down a path like silver molten  
Steadily rowed King Olaf's ships;

Steadily burned all night the tapers,  
And the White Christ through the vapors  
Gleamed across the Fiord of Salten,  
As through John's Apocalypse,—

Till at last they reached Raud's dwelling  
On the little isle of Gelling;  
Not a guard was at the doorway,  
Not a glimmer of light was seen.

But at anchor, carved and gilded,  
Lay the dragon-ship he builded;  
'T was the grandest ship in Norway,  
With its crest and scales of green.

Up the stairway, softly creeping,  
To the loft where Raud was sleeping,  
With their fists they burst asunder  
Bolt and bar that held the door.

Drunken with sleep and ale they found him,  
Dragged him from his bed and bound him,  
While he stared with stupid wonder,  
At the look and garb they wore.

Then King Olaf said: "O Sea-King!  
Little time have we for speaking,  
Choose between the good and evil;  
Be baptized, or thou shalt die!"

But in scorn the heathen scoffed  
Answered: "I disdain thine offer;  
Neither fear I God nor Devil;  
Thee and thy Gospel I defy!"

Then between his jaws distended,  
When his frantic struggles ended,  
Through King Olaf's horn an adder,  
Touched by fire, they forced to glide.

Sharp his tooth was as an arrow,  
As he gnawed through bone and marrow;  
But without a groan or shudder,  
Raud the Strong blaspheming died.

Then baptized they all that region,  
Swarthy Lap and fair Norwegian,  
Far as swims the salmon, leaping,  
Up the streams of Salten Fiord.

In their temples 'Thor and Odin  
Lay in dust and ashes trodden,  
As King Olaf, onward sweeping,  
    Preached the Gospel with his sword.

Then he took the carved and gilded  
Dragon-ship that Raud had builded,  
And the tiller single-handed,  
    Grasping, steered into the main.

Southward sailed the sea-gulls o'er him,  
Southward sailed the ship that bore him,  
Till at Drontheim haven landed  
    Olaf and his crew again.

## XII.

## KING OLAF'S CHRISTMAS

At Drontheim, Olaf the King  
Heard the bells of Yule-tide ring,  
    As he sat in his banquet-hall,  
Drinking the nut-brown ale,  
With his bearded Berserks hale  
    And tall.

Three days his Yule-tide feasts  
He held with Bishops and Priests,  
    And his horn filled up to the brim;  
But the ale was never too strong,  
Nor the Saga-man's tale too long,  
    For him.

O'er his drinking-horn, the sign  
He made of the cross divine;  
    As he drank, and muttered his prayers;  
But the Berserks evermore  
Made the sign of the Hammer of Thor  
    Over theirs.

The gleams of the fire-light dance  
Upon helmet and hauberk and lance,  
    And laugh in the eyes of the King;  
And he cries to Halfred the Scald,  
Gray-bearded, wrinkled, and bald,  
    "Sing!"



"Sing me a song divine,  
With a sword in every line,  
    And this shall be thy reward."  
And he loosened the belt at his waist,  
And in front of the singer placed  
    His sword.

"Quern-biter of Hakon the Good,  
Wherewith at a stroke he hewed  
    The millstone through and through,  
And Foot-breadth of Thoralf the Strong,  
Were neither so broad nor so long,  
    Nor so true."

Then the Scald took his harp and sang,  
And loud through the music rang  
    The sound of that shining word;  
And the harp-strings a clangor made,  
As if they were struck with the blade  
    Of a sword.

And the Berserks round about  
Broke forth into a shout  
    That made the rafters ring:  
They smote with their fists on the board,  
And shouted, "Long live the Sword,  
    And the King!"

But the King said, "O my son,  
I miss the bright word in one  
    Of thy measures and thy rhymes."  
And Halfred the Scald replied,  
"In another 't was multiplied  
    Three times."

'Then King Olaf raised the hilt,  
Of iron, cross-shaped and gilt,  
And said, "Do not refuse;  
Count well the gain and the loss,  
'Thor's hammer or Christ's cross:  
Choose!"

And Halfred the Scald said, "This  
In the name of the Lord I kiss,  
Who on it was crucified!"  
And a shout went round the board,  
"In the name of Christ the Lord,  
Who died!"

Then over the waste of snows  
The noonday sun uprose,  
Through the driving mists revealed,  
Like the lifting of the Host,  
By incense-clouds almost  
Concealed.

On the shining wall a vast  
And shadowy cross was cast  
From the hilt of the lifted sword,  
And in foaming cups of ale  
The Berserks drank "Was-hael!  
To the Lord!"

## XIII.

## THE BUILDING OF THE LONG SERPENT.

THORBERG SKAFTING, master-builder,  
In his ship-yard by the sea,  
Whistled, saying, "'T would bewilder  
Any man but Thorberg Skafting,  
Any man but me!"

Near him lay the Dragon stranded,  
Built of old by Raud the Strong,  
And King Olaf had commanded  
He should build another Dragon,  
Twice as large and long.

Therefore whistled Thorberg Skafting,  
As he sat with half-closed eyes,  
And his head turned sideways, drafting  
That new vessel for King Olaf  
Twice the Dragon's size.

Round him busily hewed and hammered  
Mallet huge and heavy axe;  
Workmen laughed and sang and clamored;  
Whirred the wheels, that into rigging  
Spun the shining flax!

All this tumult heard the master,—  
It was music to his ear:  
Fancy whispered all the faster,  
"Men shall hear of Thorberg Skafting  
For a hundred year!"

Workmen sweating at the forges  
Fashioned iron bolt and bar,  
Like a warlock's midnight orgies  
Smoked and bubbled the black caldron  
With the boiling tar.

Did the warlocks mingle in it,  
Thorberg Skafting, any curse?  
Could you not be gone a minute  
But some mischief must be doing,  
Turning bad to worse?

'T was an ill wind that came wafting,  
From his homestead words of woe;  
To his farm went Thorberg Skafting,  
Oft repeating to his workmen,  
Build ye thus and so.

After long delays returning  
Came the master back by night;  
To his ship-yard longing, yearning,  
Hurried he, and did not leave it  
Till the morning's light.

"Come and see my ship, my darling!"  
On the morrow said the King  
"Finished now from keel to carling;  
Never yet was seen in Norway  
Such a wondrous thing!"

In the ship-yard, idly talking,  
At the ship the workmen stared:  
Some one, all their labor balking,  
Down her sides had cut deep gashes,  
Not a plank was spared!

"Death be to the evil-doer!"  
With an oath King Olaf spoke;  
"But rewards to his pursuer!"  
And with wrath his face grew redder  
Than his scarlet cloak.

Straight the master-builder, smiling,  
Answered thus the angry King:  
"Cease blaspheming and reviling,  
Olaf, it was Thorberg Skafting  
Who has done this thing!"

Then he chipped and smoothed the planking,  
Till the King, delighted, swore,  
With much lauding and much thanking,  
"Handsomest is now my Dragon  
Than she was before!"

Seventy ells and four extended  
On the grass the vessel's keel;  
High above it, gilt and splendid,  
Rose the figure-head ferocious  
With its crest of steel.

Then they launched her from the tressels,  
In the ship-yard by the sea;  
She was the grandest of all vessels,  
Never ship was built in Norway  
Half so fine as she!

The Long Serpent was she christened,  
'Mid the roar of cheer on cheer!  
They who to the Saga listened  
Heard the name of Thorberg Skafting  
For a hundred year!

## XIV.

## THE CREW OF THE LONG SERPENT.

SAFE at anchor in Drontheim bay  
King Olaf's fleet assembled lay,  
And, striped with white and blue,  
Downward fluttered sail and banner,  
As alights the screaming lanner;  
Lustily cheered, in their wild manner,  
The Long Serpent's crew.

Her forecastle man was Ulf the Red;  
Like a wolf's was his shaggy head,  
His teeth as large and white;  
His beard, of gray and russet blended  
Round as a swallow's nest descended;  
As standard-bearer he defended  
Olaf's flag in the fight.

Near him Kolbiorn had his place,  
Like the King in garb and face,  
So gallant and so hale;  
Every cabin-boy and varlet  
Wondered at his cloak of scarlet;  
Like a river, frozen and star-lit,  
Gleamed his coat of mail.

By the bulkhead, tall and dark,  
Stood Thrand Rame of Thelemark,  
    A figure gaunt and grand;  
On his hairy arm imprinted  
Was an anchor, azure-tinted;  
Like Thor's hammer, huge and dinted  
    Was his brawny hand.

Einar Tamberskelver, bare  
To the winds his golden hair,  
    By the mainmast stood;  
Graceful was his form, and slender,  
And his eyes were deep and tender  
As a woman's, in the splendor  
    Of her maidenhood.

In the fore-hold Biorn and Bork  
Watched the sailors at their work:  
    Heavens! how they swore!  
Thirty men they each commanded,  
Iron-sinewed, horny-handed,  
Shoulders broad, and chests expanded,  
    Tugging at the oar.

These, and many more like these,  
With King Olaf sailed the seas,  
    Till the waters vast  
Filled them with a vague devotion,  
With the freedom and the motion,  
With the roll and roar of ocean  
    And the sounding blast.

When they landed from the fleet,  
How they roared through Drontheim's street,  
    Boisterous as the gale!  
How they laughed and stamped and pounded,  
Till the tavern roof resounded,  
And the host looked on astounded  
    As they drank the ale!

Never saw the wild North Sea  
Such a gallant company  
    Sail its billows blue!  
Never, while they cruised and quarrelled,  
Old King Gorm, or Blue-Tooth Harald,  
Owned a ship so well apparelled,  
    Boasted such a crew!



## XV.

## A LITTLE BIRD IN THE AIR.

A LITTLE bird in the air  
Is singing of Thyri the fair,  
The sister of Svend the Dane;  
And the song of the garrulous bird  
In the streets of the town is heard,  
And repeated again and again.  
Hoist up your sails of silk,  
And flee away from each other.

To King Burislaf, it is said,  
Was the beautiful Thyri wed,  
And a sorrowful bride went she,  
And after a week and a day,  
She has fled away and away,  
From his town by the stormy sea.  
Hoist up your sails of silk,  
And flee away from each other.

They say, that through heat and through cold,  
Through weald, they say, and through wold,  
By day and by night, they say,  
She has fled; and the gossips report  
She has come to King Olaf's court,  
And the town is all in dismay.  
Hoist up your sails of silk,  
And flee away from each other.

It is whispered King Olaf has seen,  
Has talked with the beautiful Queen;  
And they wonder how it will end;  
For surely, if here she remain,  
It is war with King Svend the Dane,  
And King Burislaf the Vend!  
Hoist up your sails of silk,  
And flee away from each other.

O, greatest wonder of all!  
It is published in hamlet and hall,  
It roars like a flame that is fanned!  
The King—yes, Olaf the King—  
Has wedded her with his ring,  
And Thyri is Queen in the land!  
Hoist up your sails of silk,  
And flee away from each other.

## XVI.

## QUEEN THYRI AND THE ANGELICA STALKS.

NORTHWARD over Drontheim,  
Flew the clamorous sea-gulls,  
Sang the lark and linnet  
From the meadows green;

Weeping in her chamber,  
Lonely and unhappy,  
Sat the Drottning Thyri,  
Sat King Olaf's Queen.

In at all the windows  
Streamed the pleasant sunshine,  
On the roof above her  
Softly cooed the dove;

But the sound she heard not,  
Nor the sunshine heeded,  
For the thoughts of Thyri  
Were not thoughts of love.

Then King Olaf entered,  
Beautiful as morning,  
Like the sun at Easter  
Shone his happy face;

In his hand he carried  
Angelicas uprooted,  
With delicious fragrance  
Filling all the place.

Like a rainy midnight  
Sat the Drottning Thyri,  
Even the smile of Olaf  
    Could not cheer her gloom;

Nor the stalks he gave her  
With a gracious gesture,  
And with words as pleasant  
    As their own perfume.

In her hands he placed them,  
And her jewelled fingers  
Through the green leaves glistened  
    Like the dews of morn;

But she cast them from her,  
Haughty and indignant,  
On the floor she threw them  
    With a look of scorn.

"Richer presents," said she,  
"Gave King Harald Gormson  
To the Queen, my mother,  
    Than such worthless weeds;

"When he ravaged Norway,  
Laying waste the kingdom,  
Seizing scatt and treasure  
    For her royal needs.

"But thou dardest not venture  
Through the Sound to Vendland,  
My domains to rescue  
    From King Burislaf;

"Lest King Svend of Denmark,  
Forked Beard, my brother,  
Scatter all thy vessels  
As the wind the chaff."

Then up sprang King Olaf,  
Like a reindeer bounding,  
With an oath he answered  
Thus the luckless Queen:

"Never yet did Olaf  
Fear King Svend of Denmark;  
This right hand shall hale him  
By his forked chin!"

Then he left the chamber,  
Thundering through the doorway,  
Loud his steps resounded  
Down the outer stair.

Smarting with the insult,  
Through the streets of Drontheim  
Strode he red and wrathful,  
With his stately air.

All his ships he gathered,  
Summoned all his forces,  
Making his war levy  
In the region round;

Down the coast of Norway,  
Like a flock of sea-gulls,  
Sailed the fleet of Olaf  
Through the Danish Sound.

With his own hand fearless,  
Steered he the Long Serpent,  
Strained the creaking cordage,  
Bent each boom and gaff;

Till in Vendland landing,  
The domains of Thyri  
He redeemed and rescued  
From King Burislaf.

Then said Olaf, laughing,  
"Not ten yoke of oxen  
Have the power to draw us  
Like a woman's hair!

"Now will I confess it,  
Better things are jewels  
Than angelica stalks are  
For a Queen to wear."

## XVII.

## KING SVEND OF THE FORKED BEARD.

LOUDLY the sailors cheered  
Svend of the Forked Beard,  
As with his fleet he steered  
Southward to Vendland;  
Where with their courses hauled  
All were together called,  
Under the Isle of Svald  
Near to the mainland.

After Queen Gunhild's death,  
So the old Saga saith,  
Plighted King Svend his faith  
To Sigrid the Haughty;  
And to avenge his bride,  
Soothing her wounded pride,  
Over the waters wide  
King Olaf sought he.

Still on her scornful face,  
Blushing with deep disgrace,  
Bore she the crimson trace  
Of Olaf's gauntlet;  
Like a malignant star,  
Blazing in heaven afar,  
Red shone the angry scar  
Under her frontlet.

Oft to King Svend she spake,  
"For thine own honor's sake  
Shalt thou swift vengeance take  
On the vile coward!"  
Until the King at last,  
Gusty and overcast,  
Like a tempestuous blast  
Threatened and lowered.

Soon as the Spring appeared,  
Svend of the Forked Beard  
High his red standard reared,  
Eager for battle;  
While every warlike Dane,  
Seizing his arms again,  
Left all unsown the grain,  
Unhoused the cattle.

Likewise the Swedish King  
Summoned in haste a Thing,  
Weapons and men to bring  
In aid of Denmark;  
Eric the Norseman, too,  
As the war-tidings flew,  
Sailed with a chosen crew  
From Lapland and Finmark.

So upon Easter day  
Sailed the three kings away,  
Out of the sheltered bay,  
In the bright season;



With them Earl Sigvald came,  
Eager for spoil and fame;  
Pity that such a name  
    Stooped to such treason!

Safe under Svald at last,  
Now were their anchors cast,  
Safe from the sea and blast,  
    Plotted the three kings;  
While, with a base intent,  
Southward Earl Sigvald went,  
On a foul errand bent,  
    Unto the Sea-kings.

Thence to hold on his course,  
Unto King Olaf's force,  
Lying within the hoarse  
    Mouths of Stet-haven;  
Him to ensnare and bring,  
Unto the Danish king,  
Who his dead corse would fling  
    Forth to the raven!

## XVIII.

## KING OLAF AND EARL SIGVALD.

ON the gray sea-sands  
King Olaf stands,  
Northward and seaward  
He points with his hands.

With eddy and whirl  
The sea-tides curl,  
Washing the sandals  
Of Sigvald the Earl.

The mariners shout,  
The ships swing about,  
The yards are all hoisted,  
The sails flutter out.

The war-horns are played,  
The anchors are weighed,  
Like moths in the distance  
The sails flit and fade.

The sea is like lead,  
The harbor lies dead,  
As a corse on the sea-shore,  
Whose spirit has fled!

On that fatal day,  
The histories say,  
Seventy vessels  
Sailed out of the bay.

But soon scattered wide  
O'er the billows they ride,  
While Sigvald and Olaf  
Sail side by side.

Cried the Earl: "Follow me!  
I your pilot will be,  
For I know all the channels  
Where flows the deep sea!"

So into the strait  
Where his foes lie in wait,  
Gallant King Olaf  
Sails to his fate!

Then the sea-fog veils  
The ships and their sails;  
Queen Sigrid the Haughty,  
Thy vengeance prevails!

## XIX.

## KING OLAF'S WAR-HORNS.

"STRIKE the sails!" King Olaf said;  
"Never shall men of mine take flight;  
Never away from battle I fled,  
Never away from my foes!  
Let God dispose  
Of my life in the fight!"

"Sound the horns!" said Olaf the King;  
And suddenly through the drifting brume  
The blare of the horns began to ring,  
Like the terrible trumpet shock  
Of Ragnarock,  
On the Day of Doom!

Louder and louder the war-horns sang  
Over the level floor of the flood;  
All the sails came down with a clang,  
And there in the mist overhead  
The sun hung red  
As a drop of blood.

Drifting down on the Danish fleet  
Three together the ships were lashed,  
So that neither should turn and retreat;  
In the midst, but in front of the rest  
The burnished crest  
Of the Serpent flashed.

King Olaf stood on the quarter-deck,  
With bow of ash and arrows of oak,  
His gilded shield was without a fleck,  
His helmet inlaid with gold,  
    And in many a fold  
Hung his crimson cloak.

On the forecastle Ulf the Red  
Watched the lashing of the ships;  
"If the Serpent lie so far ahead,  
We shall have hard work of it here,"  
    Said he with a sneer  
On his bearded lips.

King Olaf laid an arrow on string,  
"Have I a coward on board?" said he.  
"Shoot it another way, O King!"  
Sullenly answered Ulf,  
    The old sea-wolf;  
"You have need of me!"

In front came Svend, the King of the Danes,  
Sweeping down with his fifty rowers;  
To the right, the Swedish king with his thanes;  
And on board of the Iron Beard  
    Earl Eric steered  
On the left with his oars.

"These soft Danes and Swedes," said the King,  
"At home with their wives had better stay,  
'Than come within reach of my Serpent's sting:  
But where Eric the Norseman leads  
    Heroic deeds  
Will be done to-day!"

Then as together the vessels crashed,  
Eric severed the cables of hide,  
With which King Olaf's ships were lashed,  
And left them to drive and drift

With the currents swift  
Of the outward tide.

Louder the war-horns growl and snarl,  
Sharper the dragons bite and sting!  
Eric the son of Hakon Jarl  
A death-drink salt as the sea

Pledges to thee,  
Olaf the King!

## XX.

## EINAR TAMBERSKELVER.

IT was Einar Tamberskelver  
Stood beside the mast;  
From his yew-bow, tipped with silver,  
Flew the arrows fast;  
Aimed at Eric unavailing,  
As he sat concealed,  
Half behind the quarter-railing,  
Half behind his shield.

First an arrow struck the tiller,  
Just above his head;  
"Sing, O Eyvind Skaldaspiller,"  
Then Earl Eric said.  
"Sing the song of Hakon dying,  
Sing his funeral wail!"  
And another arrow flying  
Grazed his coat of mail.

Turning to a Lapland yeoman,  
As the arrows passed,  
Said Earl Eric, "Shoot that bowman  
Standing by the mast."  
Sooner than the word was spoken  
Flew the yeoman's shaft;  
Einar's bow in twain was broken,  
Einar only laughed.

"What was that?" said Olaf, standing  
On the quarter-deck.

"Something heard I like the stranding  
Of a shattered wreck."

Einar then, the arrow taking  
From the loosened string,

Answered, "That was Norway breaking  
From thy hand, O king!"

"Thou art but a poor diviner,"  
Straightway Olaf said;

"Take my bow, and swifter, Einar,  
Let thy shafts be sped."

Of his bows the fairest choosing,  
Reached he from above;

Einar saw the blood-drops oozing  
Through his iron glove.

- But the bow was thin and narrow;  
At the first assay,  
O'er its head he drew the arrow,  
Flung the bow away;  
Said, with hot and angry temper  
Flushing in his cheek,  
"Olaf! for so great a Kämper  
Are thy bows too weak!"

Then, with smile of joy defiant  
On his beardless lip,  
Scaled he, light and self-reliant,  
Eric's dragon-ship.



Loose his golden locks were flowing,  
Bright his armor gleamed;  
Like Saint Michael overthrowing  
Lucifer he seemed.

## XXI.

## KING OLAF'S DEATH-DRINK.

ALL day has the battle raged,  
All day have the ships engaged,  
But not yet is assuaged  
The vengeance of Eric the Earl.

The decks with blood are red,  
The arrows of death are sped,  
The ships are filled with the dead,  
And the spears the champions hurl.

They drift as wrecks on the tide,  
The grappling-irons are plied,  
The boarders climb up the side,  
The shouts are feeble and few.

Ah! never shall Norway again  
See her sailors come back o'er the main;  
They all lie wounded or slain,  
Or asleep in the billows blue!

On the deck stands Olaf the King,  
Around him whistle and sing  
The spears that the foemen fling,  
And the stones they hurl with their hands.

In the midst of the stones and the spears,  
Kolbiorn, the marshal, appears,  
His shield in the air he uprears,  
By the side of King Olaf he stands.

Over the slippery wreck  
Of the Long Serpent's deck  
Sweeps Eric with hardly a check,  
His lips with anger are pale;

He hews with his axe at the mast,  
Till it falls, with the sails overcast,  
Like a snow-covered pine in the vast  
Dim forests of Orkadale.

Seeking King Olaf then,  
He rushes aft with his men,  
As a hunter into the den  
Of the bear, when he stands at bay.

"Remember Jarl Hakon!" he cries;  
When lo! on his wondering eyes,  
Two kingly figures arise,  
Two Olafs in warlike array!

Then Kolbiorn speaks in the ear  
Of King Olaf a word of cheer,  
In a whisper that none may hear,  
With a smile on his tremulous lip;

T'wo shields raised high in the air,  
Two flashes of golden hair,  
Two scarlet meteors' glare,  
And both have leaped from the ship.

Earl Eric's men in the boats  
Seize Kolbiorn's shield as it floats,  
And cry, from their hairy throats,  
"See! it is Olaf the King!"

While far on the opposite side  
Floats another shield on the tide,  
Like a jewel set in the wide  
Sea-current's eddying ring.

There is told a wonderful tale,  
How the King stripped off his mail,  
Like leaves of the brown sea-kale,  
As he swam beneath the main;

But the young grew old and gray,  
And never, by night or by day,  
In his kingdom of Norroway  
Was King Olaf seen again!

## XXII.

## THE NUN OF NIDAROS.

IN the convent of Drontheim,  
Alone in her chamber  
Knelt Astrid the Abbess,  
At midnight, adoring,  
Beseeching, entreating  
The Virgin and Mother.

She heard in the silence  
The voice of one speaking,  
Without in the darkness,  
In gusts of the night-wind  
Now louder, now nearer,  
Now lost in the distance.

The voice of a stranger  
It seemed as she listened,  
Of some one who answered,  
Beseeching, imploring,  
A cry from afar off  
She could not distinguish.

The voice of Saint John,  
The beloved disciple,  
Who wandered and waited  
The Master's appearance,  
Alone in the darkness,  
Unsheltered and friendless.

"It is accepted  
The angry defiance,  
The challenge of battle!  
It is accepted,  
But not with the weapons  
Of war that thou wieldest!

"Cross against corslet,  
Love against hatred,  
Peace-cry for war-cry!  
Patience is powerful;  
He that o'ercometh  
Hath power o'er the nations!

"As torrents in summer,  
Half dried in their channels,  
Suddenly rise, though the  
Sky is still cloudless,  
For rain has been falling  
Far off at their fountains;

"So hearts that are fainting  
Grow full to o'erflowing,  
And they that behold it  
Marvel, and know not  
That God at their fountains  
Far off has been raining!

"Stronger than steel  
Is the sword of the Spirit;  
Swifter than arrows  
The light of the truth is,  
Greater than anger  
Is love, and subdueth!

"Thou art a phantom,  
A shape of the sea-mist,  
A shape of the brumal  
Rain, and the darkness  
Fearful and formless;  
Day dawns and thou art not!

"The dawn is not distant,  
Nor is the night starless;  
Love is eternal!  
God is still God, and  
His faith shall not fail us;  
Christ is eternal!"

## INTERLUDE.

A STRAIN of music closed the tale,  
A low, monotonous, funeral wail,  
That with its cadence, wild and sweet,  
Made the long Saga more complete.

"Thank God," the Theologian said,  
"The reign of violence is dead,  
Or dying surely from the world;  
While Love triumphant reigns instead,  
And in a brighter sky o'erhead  
His blessed banners are unfurled.  
And most of all thank God for this:  
The war and waste of clashing creeds  
Now end in words, and not in deeds,  
And no one suffers loss, or bleeds,  
For thoughts that men call heresies.

"I stand without here in the porch,  
I hear the bell's melodious din,  
I hear the organ peal within,  
I hear the prayer, with words that scorch  
Like sparks from an inverted torch,  
I hear the sermon upon sin,  
With threatenings of the last account.  
And all, translated in the air,  
Reach me but as our dear Lord's Prayer,  
And as the Sermon on the Mount.

"Must it be Calvin, and not Christ?  
Must it be Athanasian creeds,  
Or holy water, books, and beads?  
Must struggling souls remain content  
With councils and decrees of Trent?  
And can it be enough for these  
The Christian Church the year embalms  
With evergreens and boughs of palms,  
And fills the air with litanies?

"I know that yonder Pharisee  
Thanks God that he is not like me;  
In my humiliation dressed,  
I only stand and beat my breast,  
And pray for human charity.

"Not to one church alone, but seven,  
The voice prophetic spake from heaven;  
And unto each the promise came,  
Diversified, but still the same;  
For him that overcometh are  
The new name written on the stone,  
The raiment white, the crown, the throne,  
And I will give him the Morning Star!

"Ah! to how many Faith has been  
No evidence of things unseen,  
But a dim shadow, that recasts  
The creed of the Phantasiasts,  
For whom no Man of Sorrows died,  
For whom the Tragedy Divine  
Was but a symbol and a sign,  
And Christ a phantom crucified!



"For others a diviner creed  
Is living in the life they lead.  
The passing of their beautiful feet  
Blesses the pavement of the street,  
And all their looks and words repeat  
Old Fuller's saying, wise and sweet,  
Not as a vulture, but a dove,  
The Holy Ghost came from above.

"And this brings back to me a tale  
So sad the hearer well may quail,  
And question if such things can be;  
Yet in the chronicles of Spain  
Down the dark pages runs this stain,  
And naught can wash them white again,  
So fearful is the tragedy."

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## THE THEOLOGIAN'S TALE.

## TORQUEMADA.

IN the heroic days when Ferdinand  
And Isabella ruled the Spanish land,  
And Torquemada, with his subtle brain,  
Ruled them, as Grand Inquisitor of Spain,  
In a great castle near Valladolid,  
Moated and high and by fair woodlands hid,  
There dwelt, as from the chronicles we learn,  
An old Hidalgo proud and taciturn,  
Whose name has perished, with his towers of stone,  
And all his actions save this one alone;  
This one, so terrible, perhaps 'twere best  
If it, too, were forgotten with the rest;  
Unless, perchance, our eyes can see therein  
The martyrdom triumphant o'er the sin;  
A double picture, with its gloom and glow,  
The splendor overhead, the death below.

This sombre man counted each day as lost  
On which his feet no sacred threshold crossed;  
And when he chanced the passing Host to meet,  
He knelt and prayed devoutly in the street;  
Oft he confessed; and with each mutinous thought,  
As with wild beasts at Ephesus, he fought.  
In deep contrition scourged himself in Lent,  
Walked in processions, with his head down bent,

At plays of Corpus Christi oft was seen,  
And on Palm Sunday bore his bough of green.  
His only pastime was to hunt the boar  
Through tangled thickets of the forest hoar,  
Or with his jingling mules to hurry down  
To some grand bull-fight in the neighboring town,  
Or in the crowd with lighted taper stand,  
When Jews were burned, or banished from the land.  
Then stirred within him a tumultuous joy;  
The demon whose delight is to destroy  
Shook him, and shouted with a trumpet tone,  
"Kill! kill! and let the Lord find out his own!"

And now, in that old castle in the wood,  
His daughters, in the dawn of womanhood,  
Returning from their convent school, had made  
Resplendent with their bloom the forest shade,  
Reminding him of their dead mother's face,  
When first she came into that gloomy place,—  
A memory in his heart as dim and sweet  
As moonlight in a solitary street,  
Where the same rays, that lift the sea, are thrown  
Lovely but powerless upon walls of stone.  
These two fair daughters of a mother dead  
Were all the dream had left him as it fled.  
A joy at first, and then a growing care,  
As if a voice within him cried, "Beware!"  
A vague presentiment of impending doom,  
Like ghostly footsteps in a vacant room,  
Haunted him day and night; a formless fear  
That death to some one of his house was near,  
With dark surmises of a hidden crime,  
Made life itself a death before its time.

Jealous, suspicious, with no sense of shame,  
A spy upon his daughters he became;  
With velvet slippers, noiseless on the floors,  
He glided softly through half-open doors;  
Now in the room, and now upon the stair,  
He stood beside them ere they were aware;  
He listened in the passage when they talked,  
He watched them from the casement when they walked,  
He saw the gypsy haunt the river's side,  
He saw the monk among the cork-trees glide;  
And, tortured by the mystery and the doubt  
Of some dark secret, past his finding out,  
Baffled he paused; then reassured again  
Pursued the flying phantom of his brain.  
He watched them even when they knelt in church;  
And then, descending lower in his search,  
Questioned the servants, and with eager eyes  
Listened incredulous to their replies;  
The gypsy? none had seen her in the wood!  
The monk? a mendicant in search of food!

At length the awful revelation came,  
Crushing at once his pride of birth and name,  
The hopes his yearning bosom forward cast,  
And the ancestral glories of the past;  
All fell together, crumbling in disgrace,  
A turret rent from battlement to base.  
His daughters talking in the dead of night  
In their own chamber, and without a light,  
Listening, as he was wont, he overheard,  
And learned the dreadful secret, word by word;  
And hurrying from his castle, with a cry  
He raised his hands to the unpitying sky,

Repeating one dread word, till bush and tree  
Caught it, and shuddering answered, "Heresy!"

Wrapped in his cloak, his hat drawn o'er his face,  
Now hurrying forward, now with lingering pace,  
He walked all night the alleys of his park,  
With one unseen companion in the dark,  
The Demon who within him lay in wait,  
And by his presence turned his love to hate,  
Forever muttering in an undertone,  
"Kill! kill! and let the Lord find out his own!"

Upon the morrow, after early Mass,  
While yet the dew was glistening on the grass,  
And all the woods were musical with birds,  
The old Hidalgo, uttering fearful words,  
Walked homeward with the Priest, and in his room  
Summoned his trembling daughters to their doom.  
When questioned, with brief answers they replied,  
Nor when accused evaded or denied;  
Expostulations, passionate appeals,  
All that the human heart most fears or feels,  
In vain the Priest with earnest voice essayed,  
In vain the father threatened, wept, and prayed;  
Until at last he said, with haughty mien,  
"The Holy Office, then, must intervene!"

And now the Grand Inquisitor of Spain,  
With all the fifty horsemen of his train,  
His awful name resounding, like the blast  
Of funeral trumpets, as he onward passed,  
Came to Valladolid, and there began  
To harry the rich Jews with fire and ban.

To him the Hidalgo went, and at the gate  
Demanded audience on affairs of state,  
And in a secret chamber stood before  
A venerable graybeard of fourscore,  
Dressed in the hood and habit of a friar;  
Out of his eyes flashed a consuming fire,  
And in his hand the mystic horn he held,  
Which poison and all noxious charms dispelled  
He heard in silence the Hidalgo's tale,  
Then answered in a voice that made him quail:  
"Son of the Church! when Abraham of old  
To sacrifice his only son was told,  
He did not pause to parley nor protest,  
But hastened to obey the Lord's behest.  
In him it was accounted righteousness;  
The Holy Church expects of thee no less!"

A sacred frenzy seized the father's brain,  
And Mercy from that hour implored in vain.  
Ah! who will e'er believe the words I say?  
His daughters he accused, and the same day  
They both were cast into the dungeon's gloom,  
That dismal antechamber of the tomb,  
Arraigned, condemned, and sentenced to the flame,  
The secret torture and the public shame.

Then to the Grand Inquisitor once more  
The Hidalgo went, more eager than before,  
And said: "When Abraham offered up his son,  
He clave the wood wherewith it might be done.  
By his example taught, let me too bring  
Wood from the forest for my offering!"

And the deep voice, without a pause, replied:  
"Son of the Church! by faith now justified,  
Complete thy sacrifice, even as thou wilt;  
The Church absolves thy conscience from all guilt!"

Then this most wretched father went his way  
Into the woods, that round his castle lay,  
Where once his daughters in their childhood played  
With their young mother in the sun and shade.  
Now all the leaves had fallen; the branches bare  
Made a perpetual moaning in the air,  
And screaming from their eyries overhead  
The ravens sailed athwart the sky of lead.  
With his own hands he lopped the boughs and bound  
Fagots, that crackled with foreboding sound,  
And on his mules, caparisoned and gay  
With bells and tassels, sent them on their way.

Then with his mind on one dark purpose bent,  
Again to the Inquisitor he went,  
And said: "Behold, the fagots I have brought,  
And now, lest my atonement be as naught,  
Grant me one more request, one last desire,—  
With my own hand to light the funeral fire!"  
And Torquemada answered from his seat,  
"Son of the Church! 'Thine offering is complete;  
Her servants through all ages shall not cease  
To magnify thy deed. Depart in peace!"

Upon the market-place, builded of stone  
'The scaffold rose, whereon Death claimed his own.  
At the four corners, in stern attitude,  
Four statues of the Hebrew Prophets stood,

Gazing with calm indifference in their eyes  
Upon this place of human sacrifice,  
Round which was gathering fast the eager crowd,  
With clamor of voices dissonant and loud,  
And every roof and window was alive  
With restless gazers, swarming like a hive.

The church-bells tolled, the chant of monks drew near,  
Loud trumpets stammered forth their notes of fear,  
A line of torches smoked along the street,  
'There was a stir, a rush, a tramp of feet,  
And, with its banners floating in the air,  
Slowly the long procession crossed the square,  
And, to the statues of the Prophets bound,  
The victims stood, with fagots piled around.  
Then all the air a blast of trumpets shook,  
And louder sang the monks with bell and book,  
And the Hidalgo, lofty, stern, and proud,  
Lifted his torch, and, bursting through the crowd,  
Lighted in haste the fagots, and then fled,  
Lest those imploring eyes should strike him dead!

O pitiless skies! why did your clouds retain  
For peasants' fields their floods of hoarded rain?  
O pitiless earth! why opened no abyss  
To bury in its chasm a crime like this?

That night, a mingled column of fire and smoke  
From the dark thickets of the forest broke,  
And, glaring o'er the landscape leagues away,  
Made all the fields and hamlets bright as day.  
Wrapped in a sheet of flame the castle blazed,  
And as the villagers in terror gazed,



They saw the figure of that cruel knight  
Lean from a window in the turret's height,  
His ghastly face illumined with the glare,  
His hands upraised above his head in prayer,  
Till the floor sank beneath him, and he fell  
Down the black hollow of that burning well.

Three centuries and more above his bones  
Have piled the oblivious years like funeral stones;  
His name has perished with him, and no trace  
Remains on earth of his afflicted race;  
But Torquemada's name, with clouds o'ercast,  
Looms in the distant landscape of the Past,  
Like a burnt tower upon a blackened heath,  
Lit by the fires of burning woods beneath!

## INTERLUDE.

Thus closed the tale of guilt and gloom,  
That cast upon each listener's face  
Its shadow, and for some brief space  
Unbroken silence filled the room.  
The Jew was thoughtful and distressed;  
Upon his memory thronged and pressed  
The persecution of his race,  
Their wrongs and sufferings and disgrace;  
His head was sunk upon his breast,  
And from his eyes alternate came  
Flashes of wrath and tears of shame.

The student first the silence broke,  
As one who long has lain in wait,  
With purpose to retaliate,  
And thus he dealt the avenging stroke.  
"In such a company as this,  
A tale so tragic seems amiss,  
That by its terrible control  
O'ermasters and drags down the soul  
Into a fathomless abyss.  
The Italian Tales that you disdain,  
Some merry Night of Straparole,  
Or Machiavelli's Belpagor,  
Would cheer us and delight us more,  
Give greater pleasure and less pain  
Than your grim tragedies of Spain!"

And here the Poet raised his hand,  
With such entreaty and command,  
It stopped discussion at its birth,  
And said: "The story I shall tell  
Has meaning in it, if not mirth;  
Listen, and hear what once befell  
The merry birds of Killingworth!"

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### THE POET'S TALE.

#### THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH.

It was the season, when through all the land  
The merle and mavis build, and building sing  
Those lovely lyrics, written by His hand,  
Whom Saxon Cædmon calls the Blithe-heart King;  
When on the boughs the purple buds expand,  
The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,  
And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,  
And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the blue-bird, piping loud!  
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee;  
The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud  
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;  
And hungry crows assembled in a crowd,  
Clamored their piteous prayer incessantly,  
Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said:  
"Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,  
Speaking some unknown language strange and sweet  
Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed  
The village with the cheers of all their fleet;  
Or quarrelling together laughed and railed  
Like foreign sailors, landed in the street  
Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise  
Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth,  
In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;  
And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the earth,  
Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,  
That mingled with the universal mirth,  
Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe;  
They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful words  
To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway  
To set a price upon the guilty heads  
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,  
Levied black-mail upon the garden beds  
And corn-fields, and beheld without dismay  
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds;  
The skeleton that waited at their feast,  
Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased.

Then from his house, a temple painted white,  
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,  
The Squire came forth, august and splendid sight!  
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,

Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right,  
Down the long street he walked, as one who said,  
"A town that boasts inhabitants like me  
Can have no lack of good society!"

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,  
The instinct of whose nature was to kill;  
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,  
And read, with fervor, Edwards on the Will;  
His favorite pastime was to slay the deer  
In Summer on some Adirondac hill;  
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,  
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned  
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,  
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,  
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass,  
And all absorbed in reveries profound  
Of fair Almira in the upper class,  
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,  
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door,  
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as snow;  
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;  
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;  
There never was so wise a man before;  
He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!"  
And to perpetuate his great renown  
There was a street named after him in town.

These came together in the new town-hall,  
With sundry farmers from the region round.  
The Squire presided, dignified and tall,  
His air impressive and his reasoning sound;  
Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small;  
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,  
But enemies enough, who every one  
Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun.

When they had ended, from his place apart,  
Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,  
And, trembling like a steed before the start,  
Looked round bewildered on the expectant throng;  
Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart  
To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,  
Alike regardless of their smile or frown,  
And quite determined not to be laughed down.

"Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,  
From his Republic banished without pity  
The Poets; in this little town of yours,  
You put to death, by means of a Committee,  
The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,  
The street-musicians of the heavenly city,  
The birds, who make sweet music for us all  
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

"The thrush that carols at the dawn of day  
From the green steeples of the piny wood;  
The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,  
Jargoning like a foreigner at his food;

The blue-bird balanced on some topmost spray,  
Flooding with melody the neighborhood;  
Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng  
That dwell in nests, and have the gift of song.

“You slay them all! and wherefore? for the gain  
Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,  
Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,  
Scratched up at random by industrious feet,  
Searching for worm or weevil after rain!  
Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet  
As are the songs these uninvited guests  
Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.

“Do you ne’er think what wondrous beings these?  
Do you ne’er think who made them, and who taught  
The dialect they speak, where melodies  
Alone are the interpreters of thought?  
Whose household words are songs in many keys,  
Sweeter than instrument of man e’er caught!  
Whose habitations in the tree-tops even  
Are half-way houses on the road to heaven!

“Think, every morning when the sun peeps through  
The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,  
How jubilant the happy birds renew  
Their old, melodious madrigals of love!  
And when you think of this, remember too  
’T is always morning somewhere, and above  
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,  
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

"Think of your woods and orchards without birds!

Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams  
As in an idiot's brain remembered words

Hang empty 'mid the cobwebs of his dreams!  
Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds

Make up for the lost music, when your teams  
Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more  
The feathered gleaners follow to your door?

"What! would you rather see the incessant stir

Of insects in the winrows of the hay,  
And hear the locust and the grasshopper

Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play?  
Is this more pleasant to you than the whirr

Of meadow-lark, and its sweet roundelay,  
Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take  
Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake?

"You call them thieves and pillagers; but know

They are the winged wardens of your farms,  
Who from the cornfields drive the insidious foe,  
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms;  
Even the blackest of them all, the crow,

Renders good service as your man-at-arms,  
Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,  
And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

"How can I teach your children gentleness,

And mercy to the weak, and reverence  
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,  
Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,



Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less  
The selfsame light, although averted hence,  
When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,  
You contradict the very things I teach?"

With this he closed; and through the audience went  
A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves;  
The farmers laughed and nodded, and some bent  
Their yellow heads together like their sheaves;  
Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment  
Who put their trust in bullocks and in beeves.  
The birds were doomed; and, as the record shows,  
A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,  
Who had no voice nor vote in making laws,  
But in the papers read his little speech,  
And crowned his modest temples with applause;  
They made him conscious, each one more than each,  
He still was victor, vanquished in their cause.  
Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee,  
O fair Almira at the Academy!

And so the dreadful massacre began;  
O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,  
The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.  
Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their breasts,  
Or wounded crept away from sight of man,  
While the young died of famine in their nests;  
A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,  
The very St. Bartholomew of Birds!

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead;  
The days were like hot coals; the very ground  
Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed  
Myriads of caterpillars, and around  
The cultivated fields and garden beds  
Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found  
No foe to check their march, till they had made  
The land a desert without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,  
Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly  
Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun down  
The canker-worms upon the passers-by,  
Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,  
Who shook them off with just a little cry;  
They were the terror of each favorite walk,  
The endless theme of all the village talk.

The farmers grew impatient, but a few  
Confessed their error, and would not complain,  
For after all, the best thing one can do  
When it is raining, is to let it rain.  
Then they repealed the law, although they knew  
It would not call the dead to life again;  
As school-boys, finding their mistake too late,  
Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came  
Without the light of his majestic look,  
The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,  
The illumined pages of his Doom's-Day book.

A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,  
And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,  
While the wild wind went moaning everywhere,  
Lamenting the dead children of the air!

But the next Spring a stranger sight was seen,  
A sight that never yet by bard was sung,  
As great a wonder as it would have been  
If some dumb animal had found a tongue!  
A wagon, overarched with evergreen,  
Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,  
All full of singing birds, came down the street,  
Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were brought,  
By order of the town, with anxious quest,  
And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought  
In woods and fields the places they loved best,  
Singing loud canticles, which many thought  
Were satires to the authorities addressed,  
While others, listening in green lanes, averred  
Such lovely music never had been heard!

But blither still and louder carolled they  
Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know  
It was the fair Almira's wedding day,  
And everywhere, around, above, below,  
When the Preceptor bore his bride away,  
Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,  
And a new heaven bent over a new earth  
Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth.

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## FINALE.

THE hour was late; the fire burned low,  
The Landlord's eyes were closed in sleep,  
And near the story's end a deep  
Sonorous sound at times was heard,  
As when the distant bagpipes blow.  
At this all laughed; the Landlord stirred,  
As one awaking from a swoond,  
And, gazing anxiously around,  
Protested that he had not slept,  
But only shut his eyes, and kept  
His ears attentive to each word.

Then all arose, and said "Good Night."  
Alone remained the drowsy Squire  
To rake the embers of the fire,  
And quench the waning parlor light;  
While from the windows, here and there,  
The scattered lamps a moment gleamed,  
And the illumined hostel seemed  
The constellation of the Bear,  
Downward, athwart the misty air,  
Sinking and setting toward the sun.  
Far off the village clock struck one.

**THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.**

I.

MILES STANDISH.

In the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land of the Pilgrims,  
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive dwelling,  
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan leather,  
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish, the Puritan  
Captain.

Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands behind him, and  
pausing

Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of warfare  
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the chamber,—  
Cutlass and corslet of steel, and his trusty sword of Damascus,  
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical Arabic  
sentence,

While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket,  
and matchlock.

Short of stature he was, but strongly built and athletic,  
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles and  
sinews of iron;

Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard was already  
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges sometimes in No-  
vember.

Near him was seated John Alden, his friend and household  
companion,

Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by the window;  
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon complexion,  
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty thereof, as the  
captives

Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, "Not Angles,  
but Angels."

Youngest of all was he of the men who came in the *Mayflower*.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe interrupting,  
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish, the Captain  
of Plymouth:

"Look at these arms," he said, "the warlike weapons that  
hang here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or inspection!

This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders;  
this breastplate,

Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a skirmish;  
Here in front you can see the very dint of the bullet

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.

Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of Miles  
Standish

Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the Flemish  
morasses."

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from his  
writing:

"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of  
the bullet;

He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our  
weapon!"

Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words of the  
stripling:

"See, how bright they are burnished, as if in an arsenal  
hanging:

That is because I have done it myself, and not left it to  
others.

Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an excellent  
adage;

So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and your  
inkhorn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, invincible army,  
Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his  
matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and pillage,  
And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my soldiers!"  
'This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes, as the  
sunbeams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again in a mo-  
ment.

Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain continued:  
"Look! you can see from this window my brazen howitzer  
planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who speaks to the  
purpose,

Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible logic,  
Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of the  
heathen.

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the Indians;  
Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they try it the  
better,—

Let them come, if they like, be it sagamore, sachem, or  
pow-wow,

Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokamahamon!"  
Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed on the  
landscape,

Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory breath of the east  
wind,

Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue rim of the  
ocean,



Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows and sunshine  
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those on the landscape,

Gloom intermingled with light; and his voice was subdued  
with emotion,

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he proceeded:

"Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose  
Standish;

Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside;  
She was the first to die of all who came in the *Mayflower*.

Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown  
there,

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our people,  
Lest they should count them and see how many already have  
perished!"

Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and down, and was  
thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books, and among  
them

Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and for binding;  
Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Cæsar,  
Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Golding of London,  
And, as if guarded by these, between them was standing the  
Bible.

Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish paused, as if  
doubtful

Which of the three he should choose for his consolation and  
comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous campaigns of  
the Romans,

Or the artillery practice, designed for belligerent Christians.  
Finally down from its shelf he dragged the ponderous Roman,

Seated himself at the window, and opened the book, and in  
silence  
Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-marks thick  
on the margin,  
Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was hottest.  
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the  
stripling,  
Busily writing epistles important, to go by the *Mayflower*,  
Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest, God  
willing!  
Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible winter,  
Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of Priscilla,  
Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden  
Priscilla!

## II.

## LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the  
stripling,  
Or an occasional sigh from the labouring heart of the Captain,  
Reading the marvellous words and achievements of Julius  
Cæsar.  
After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his hand, palm  
downwards,  
Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man was this Cæsar!  
You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow  
Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally  
skilful!"  
Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely,  
the youthful:

"Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen and his weapons.

Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he could dictate Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs."

"Truly," continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the other,

"Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar!

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,

Than be second in Rome; and I think he was right when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he conquered;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus!

Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in Flanders,

When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely together

There was no room for their swords? Why, he seized a shield from a soldier,

Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and commanded the captains,

Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns;

Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their weapons;

So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.

That's what I always say; if you wish a thing to be well done, You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"

All was silent again; the Captain continued his reading.  
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the  
stripling

Writing epistles important to go next day by the *Mayflower*,  
Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden  
Priscilla;

Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,  
Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,  
Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of  
Priscilla!

Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,  
Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his  
musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the Captain of  
Plymouth:

"When you have finished your work, I have something im-  
portant to tell you.

Be not, however, in haste; I can wait; I shall not be im-  
patient!"

Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his  
letters,

Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention:

"Speak; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to listen,  
Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish."

Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling  
his phrases:

"'T is not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures.  
This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it;  
Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.  
Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary;  
Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship.  
Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla,  
She is alone in the world; her father and mother and brother

Died in the winter together; I saw her going and coming,  
Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of the dying,  
Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself, that if  
ever

There were angels on earth as there are angels in heaven,  
Two have I seen and known; and the angel whose name is  
Priscilla

Holds in my desolate life the place which the other abandoned.

Long have I cherished the thought, but never have dared to  
reveal it,

Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for the most  
part.

Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of Plymouth,  
Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but of  
actions,

Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart of a soldier.  
Not in these words, you know, but this in short is my  
meaning;

I am a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases.

You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant  
language,

Such as you read in your books of the pleadings and wooings  
of lovers,

Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired taciturn  
stripling,

All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, bewildered,  
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject with  
lightness,

Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still in his  
bosom,

Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken by lightning,

Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered than answered:

"Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it;

If you would have it well done,—I am only repeating your maxim,—

You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"

But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn from his purpose,

Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain of Plymouth:

"Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to gainsay it; But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for nothing.

Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases.

I can march up to a fortress and summon the place to surrender,

But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I dare not.

I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth of a cannon,

But of a thundering 'No!' point-blank from the mouth of a woman,

That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed to confess it!

So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar, Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases."

Taking the hand of his friend, who still was reluctant and doubtful,

Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly, he added:

"Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling that prompts me;

Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name of our friendship!"

Then made answer John Alden: "The name of friendship is sacred;

What you demand in that name, I have not the power to deny you!"

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding the gentler,—

Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on his errand.

### III.

#### THE LOVER'S ERRAND.

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on his errand,  
Out of the street of the village, and into the paths of the forest,

Into the tranquil woods, where blue-birds and robins were building

Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of verdure,

Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and freedom.

All around him was calm, but within him commotion and conflict,

Love contending with friendship, and self with each generous impulse.

To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and dashing,

As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,  
Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean!

"Must I relinquish it all," he cried with a wild lamentation,

"Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion?

Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshipped in silence?

Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the shadow  
Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England?  
Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of corrup-  
tion

Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion;  
Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.  
All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it distinctly!  
This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,  
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and de-  
vices,  
Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.  
This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the swift retribu-  
tion."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his  
errand;  
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled over pebble  
and shallow,  
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers blooming  
around him,  
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful sweet-  
ness,  
Children lost in the woods, and covered with leaves in their  
slumber.  
"Puritan flowers," he said, "and the type of Puritan maidens,  
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of Priscilla!  
So I will take them to her; to Priscilla, the May-flower of  
Plymouth,  
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I take  
them;  
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and wither and  
perish,  
Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the giver."



So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his  
errand;  
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the ocean,  
Sail-less, sombre and cold with the comfortless breath of the  
east wind;  
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a meadow;  
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice of Priscilla  
Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan anthem,  
Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the Psalmist,  
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting  
many.  
Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the  
maiden  
Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-  
drift  
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous  
spindle,  
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in its  
motion.  
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of Ains-  
worth,  
Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the music together,  
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a  
churchyard,  
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.  
Such was the book from whose pages she sang the old Puritan  
anthem,  
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,  
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of home-  
spun  
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her  
being!

Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold and relentless,  
Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight and woe  
of his errand;  
All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that had  
vanished,  
All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless mansion,  
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.  
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it,  
"Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look back-  
wards;  
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of life to its  
fountains,  
Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and the hearths of  
the living,  
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy endureth for ever!"

So he entered the house: and the hum of the wheel and  
the singing  
Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by his step on the  
threshold,  
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in signal of wel-  
come,  
Saying, "I knew it was you, when I heard your step in the  
passage;  
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing and spin-  
ning."  
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of him had  
been mingled  
Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart of the  
maiden,  
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers for an  
answer,

Finding no words for his thought. He remembered that day  
in the winter,  
After the first great snow, when he broke a path from the  
village,  
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that encum-  
bered the doorway,  
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house, and  
Priscilla  
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the  
fireside,  
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her in the  
snow-storm.  
Had he but spoken then! perhaps not in vain had he spoken;  
Now it was all too late; the golden moment had vanished!  
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers for an  
answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and the beauti-  
ful spring-time,  
Talked of their friends at home, and the *Mayflower* that  
sailed on the morrow.  
"I have been thinking all day," said gently the Puritan  
maiden,  
"Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-  
rows of England,—  
They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden;  
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and  
the linnet,  
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbours  
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,  
And, at the end of the street, the village church, with the ivy  
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves in the  
churchyard.

Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my religion;  
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old Eng-  
land.

You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it: I almost  
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and  
wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth:—"Indeed I do not con-  
demn you;  
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in this terrible  
winter.  
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to lean on;  
So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of mar-  
riage  
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the Captain  
of Plymouth!"

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous writer of  
letters,—  
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful phrases,  
But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a  
schoolboy;  
Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more  
bluntly.  
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the Puritan  
maiden  
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with wonder,  
Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and rendered  
her speechless;  
Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the ominous  
silence:  
"If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to wed  
me,

Why does he not come himself, and take the trouble to woo me?

If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth the winning!"

Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing the matter, Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain was busy,— Had no time for such things;—such things! the words grating harshly

Fell on the ear of Priscilla; and swift as a flash she made answer:

"Has he no time for such things, as you call it, before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the wedding? That is the way with you men; you don't understand us, you cannot.

When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this one and that one,

Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another, Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps that a woman

Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected, Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have been climbing.

This is not right nor just; for surely a woman's affection Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the asking. When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it. Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that he loved me,

Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at last might have won me,

Old and rough as he is; but now it never can happen."

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,  
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, ex-  
panding;

Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in  
Flanders,

How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer affliction,  
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him Captain of  
Plymouth:

He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly  
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire,  
England,

Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston de  
Standish;

Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,  
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent  
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.

He was a man of honour, of noble and generous nature;  
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she knew how during  
the winter

He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's;  
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and head-  
strong,

Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable always,  
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of  
stature:

For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly, cou-  
rageous;

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,  
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles  
Standish!

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent  
language,

Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,  
Archly the maiden smiled, and with eyes over-running with  
    laughter,  
Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for your-  
self, John?"

## IV.

## JOHN ALDEN.

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed and bewildered,  
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone by the sea-  
    side;  
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head to the east  
    wind,  
Cooling his heated brow and the fire and fever within him.  
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptical splendours,  
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,  
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire,  
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets uplifted,  
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who measured the  
    city.

"Welcome, O wind of the East;" he exclaimed in his wild  
    exultation,  
"Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of the misty  
    Atlantic!  
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless meadows of  
    sea-grass,  
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottos and gardens of  
    ocean!  
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead, and wrap  
    me  
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever within me!"

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moaning and  
tossing,  
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of the sea-  
shore.  
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions  
contending;  
Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded and  
bleeding,  
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of  
duty!  
"Is it my fault," he said, "that the maiden has chosen  
between us?  
Is it my fault that he failed,—my fault that I am the victor?"  
Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of  
the Prophet:  
"It hath displeased the Lord!"—and he thought of David's  
transgression,  
Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the  
battle!  
Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-con-  
demnation,  
Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the deepest con-  
trition:  
"It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temptation of  
Satan!"

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld  
there  
Dimly the shadowy form of the *Mayflower* riding at anchor,  
Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow;  
Heard the voice of men through the mist, the rattle of cordage  
Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors'  
"Ay, ay, Sir!"



Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the twilight.

Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared at the vessel;

Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a phantom,  
Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckoning shadow.

"Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured; "the hand of the Lord is

Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bondage of error,  
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its waters around me,

Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts that pursue me.

Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon,  
Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart has offended,

Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England,

Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of my kindred;  
Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame and dishonour!

Sacred and safe, and unseen, in the dark of the narrow chamber

With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that glimmers  
Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of silence and darkness,—

Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter!"

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his strong resolution,

Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the twilight,

Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,  
Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,  
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.  
Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubtable Captain  
Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of Cæsar,  
Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Brabant or  
Flanders.

"Long have you been on your errand," he said, with a cheery  
demeanour,  
Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears not the  
issue.

"Not far off is the house, although the woods are between us;  
But you have lingered so long, that while you were going  
and coming

I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city.  
Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that has hap-  
pened."

Then John Alden spake, and related the wondrous adven-  
ture,  
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it happened;  
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in his court-  
ship,  
Only smoothing a little, and softening down her refusal.  
But when he came at length to the words Priscilla had spoken,  
Words so tender and cruel: "Why don't you speak for your-  
self, John?"

Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped on the  
floor, till his armour  
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound of sinister  
omen.

All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden explosion,  
Even as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction around it.

Wildly he shouted, and loud: "John Alden! you have betrayed me!

Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have supplanted, defrauded, betrayed me!

One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart of Wat Tyler;

Who shall prevent me from running my own through the heart of a traitor?

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason to friendship!

You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished and loved as a brother;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my cup, to whose keeping

I have intrusted my honour, my thoughts the most sacred and secret,—

You too, Brutus! ah, woe to the name of friendship hereafter! Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine, but henceforward

Let there be nothing between us save war, and implacable hatred!"

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode about in the chamber,

Chafing and choking with rage; like cords were the veins on his temples.

But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at the doorway,

Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent importance, Rumours of danger and war, and hostile incursions of Indians!

Straightway the Captain paused, and, without further question or parley,

Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its scabbard of  
iron,  
Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning fiercely,  
departed.  
Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the scabbard  
Growing fainter and fainter and dying away in the distance,  
Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into the  
darkness,  
Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot with the  
insult,  
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his hands as in  
childhood,  
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who seeth in  
secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful away to the  
council,  
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting his coming;  
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in deportment,  
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to heaven,  
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder of Ply-  
mouth.  
God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this  
planting,  
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a nation;  
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of the people!  
Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude stern and  
defiant,  
Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious in aspect;  
While on the table before them was lying unopened a Bible,  
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass studded, printed in  
Holland,  
And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattle-snake glittered,

Filled, like a quiver, with arrows; a signal and challenge of  
warfare,

Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy tongues of  
defiance.

This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and heard them  
debating

What were an answer befitting the hostile message and  
menace,

Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting, ob-  
jecting;

One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the Elder,  
Judging it wise and well that some at least were converted,  
Rather than any were slain, for this was but Christian be-  
haviour!

Then outspake Miles Standish, the stalwart Captain of  
Plymouth,

Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was husky with  
anger,

"What! do you mean to make war with milk and the water of  
roses?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted  
There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red de-  
vils?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a savage  
Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth of the  
cannon!"

Thereupon answered and said the excellent Elder of Ply-  
mouth,

Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent language:

"Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other Apostles;  
Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of fire they  
spake with!"

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the Captain,

Who had advanced to the table, and thus continued discouraging:

"Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it pertaineth. War is a terrible trade; but in the cause that is righteous, Sweet is the smell of powder; and thus I answer the challenge!"

Then from the rattlesnake's skin, with a sudden contemptuous gesture,  
Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder and bullets  
Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the savage,  
Saying, in thundering tones: "Here, take it! this is your answer!"  
Silently out of the room then glided the glistening savage,  
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming himself like a serpent,  
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths of the forest.

## V.

## THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER.

Just in the gray of the dawn, as the mists uprose from the meadows,  
There was a stir and a sound in the slumbering village of Plymouth;  
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order imperative,  
"Forward!"  
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and then silence.  
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of the village.  
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his valorous army,  
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend of the white men,

Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of the savage.  
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men of King  
David;  
Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the  
Bible,—  
Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines.  
Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of morning;  
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows, advancing,  
Fired along the line, and in regular order retreated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length the village  
of Plymouth  
Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold  
labours.  
Sweet was the air and soft; and slowly the smoke from the  
chimneys  
Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily eastward;  
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and talked of the  
weather,  
Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the  
*Mayflower*;  
Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers that  
menaced,  
He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his  
absence.  
Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women  
Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the household.  
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced at his  
coming;  
Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountains;  
Beautiful on the sails of the *Mayflower* riding at anchor,

Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms of the  
winter.

Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping her  
canvas,

Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands of the  
sailors.

Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the ocean,  
Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward; anon rang  
Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the echoes  
Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of departure!  
Ah! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of the people!  
Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read from the  
Bible,

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent entreaty!  
Then from their houses in haste came forth the Pilgrims of  
Plymouth,

Men and women and children, all hurrying down to the sea-  
shore,

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the *Mayflower*,  
Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them here in the  
desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night he had lain  
without slumber,

Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest of his fever.  
He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back late from the  
council,

Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and murmur,  
Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it sounded  
like swearing.

Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a moment in  
silence;

Then he had turned away, and said: "I will not awake him;



Let him sleep on, it is best; for what is the use of more talking!"

'Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself down on his pallet,

Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break of the morning,—

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his campaigns in Flanders,—

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for action.

But with the dawn he arose; in the twilight Alden beheld him

Put on his corslet of steel, and all the rest of his armour,

Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Damascus,

Take from the corner his musket, and so stride out of the chamber.

Often the heart of the youth had burned and yearned to embrace him,

Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for pardon;

All the old friendship came back, with its tender and grateful emotions;

But his pride overmastered the nobler nature within him,—

Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning fire of the insult.

So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but spake not,

Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death, and he spake not!

Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the people were saying,

Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and Richard and Gilbert,

Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of Scripture,

And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down to the sea-shore,

Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet as  
a door-step  
Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of a nation!

There with his boat was the Master, already a little im-  
patient  
Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might shift to the  
eastward,  
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odour of ocean  
about him,  
Speaking with this one and that, and cramming letters and  
parcels  
Into his pockets capacious, and messages mingled together  
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly bewildered.  
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed on the  
gunwale,  
One still firm on the rock, and talking at times with the  
sailors,  
Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager for  
starting.  
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to his anguish,  
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than keel is or  
canvas,  
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would rise and  
pursue him.  
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form of Priscilla  
Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all that was  
passing.  
Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined his intention,  
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring and  
patient,  
That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled from its  
purpose,

As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is destruction.

Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mysterious instincts!

Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,  
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine!

"Here I remain!" he exclaimed, as he looked at the heavens above him,

Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the mist and the madness,

Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering headlong.

"Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether above me,  
Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning over the ocean.

There is another hand, that is not so spectral, and ghost-like,  
Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine for protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the ether!

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt me; I heed not

Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil!

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so wholesome,  
As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is pressed by her footsteps.

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible presence  
Hover around her for ever, protecting, supporting her weakness;

Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock at the landing,

So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at the leaving!"

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified air and important,  
Scauning with watchful eye the tide and the wind and the weather,  
Walked about on the sands; and the people crowded around him  
Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful remembrance.  
Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,  
Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to his vessel,  
Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and flurry,  
Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,  
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but Gospel!  
Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the Pilgrims.  
O strong hearts and true! not one went back in the *Mayflower*!  
No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this ploughing!

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs of the sailors  
Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous anchor.  
Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the west-wind,  
Blowing steady and strong; and the *Mayflower* sailed from the harbour,  
Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to the southward  
Island and cape of sand, and the field of the first encounter,

Took the wind on her quarter and stood for the open Atlantic,  
Borne on the sand of the sea, and the swelling hearts of the  
Pilgrims

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the vessel,  
Much endeared to them all, as something living and human;  
Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapped in a vision  
prophetic,

Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Plymouth  
Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and thanked the  
Lord, and took courage.

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and  
above them

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death, and  
their kindred

Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the prayer  
that they uttered.

Sun-illuminated and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean  
Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a grave-  
yard;

Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of escaping

Lo! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of an In-  
dian,

Watching them from the hill; but while they spake with each  
other,

Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying, "Look!" he  
had vanished.

So they returned to their homes; but Alden lingered a little,  
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash of the  
billows

Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and flash of the  
sunshine,

Like the spirit of God moving visibly over the waters.

## VI.

## PRISCILLA.

Thus for a while he stood, and mused by the shore of the  
ocean,  
Thinking of many things, and most of all of Priscilla;  
And as if thought had the power to draw to itself, like the  
loadstone,  
Whatsoever it touches by subtle laws of its nature,  
Lo! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing beside him.

“Are you so much offended, you will not speak to me?”  
said she.  
“Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you were  
pleading  
Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive and way-  
ward,  
Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of de-  
corum?  
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so frankly, for  
saying  
What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never un-  
say it;  
For there are moments in life, when the heart is so full of  
emotion,  
That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like a  
pebble  
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret,  
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered to-  
gether.

Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak of Miles  
Standish,

Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into  
virtues,

Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting in  
Flanders,

As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a woman,  
Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting your hero.  
Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible impulse.

You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the friendship  
between us,

Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken!"

Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the friend of  
Miles Standish:

"I was not angry with you, with myself alone I was angry,  
Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in my keep-  
ing."

"No!" interrupted the maiden, with answer prompt and  
decisive;

"No: you were angry with me, for speaking so frankly and  
freely.

It was wrong, I acknowledge; for it is the fate of a woman  
Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is  
speechless,

Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence.

Hence is the inner life of so many suffering women

Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean rivers

Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, unseen, and  
unfruitful,

Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and profitless  
murmurs."

Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man, the lover  
of women:

"Heaven forbid it, Priscilla; and truly they seem to me  
always  
More like the beautiful rivers that watered the garden of  
Eden,  
More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah  
flowing,  
Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet of the  
garden!"  
"Ah, by these words, I can see," again interrupted the  
maiden,  
"How very little you prize me, or care for what I am saying.  
When from the depths of my heart, in pain and with secret  
misgiving,  
Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only and  
kindness,  
Straightway you take up my words, that are plain and direct  
and in earnest,  
Turn them away from their meaning, and answer with flatter-  
ing phrases.  
This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in  
you;  
For I know and esteem you, and feel that your nature is  
noble,  
Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal level.  
Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it perhaps the  
more keenly  
If you say aught that implies I am only as one among many,  
If you make use of those common and complimentary phrases  
Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking with women,  
But which women reject as insipid, if not as insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden; and listened and looked at  
Priscilla,



Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more divine in her beauty.

He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause of another, Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking in vain for an answer.

So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined What was at work in his heart, that made him so awkward and speechless.

"Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of friendship.

It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare it: I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with you always.

So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to hear you Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the Captain Miles Standish.

For I must tell you the truth: much more to me is your friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he twice the hero you think him."

Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who eagerly grasped it,

Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching and bleeding so sorely,

Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said, with a voice full of feeling:

"Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all who offer you friendship

Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and dearest!"

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of the *May-flower*,  
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the horizon,  
Homeward together they walked, with a strange indefinite  
feeling,  
That all the rest had departed and left them alone in the  
desert.  
But, as they went through the fields in the blessing and smile  
of the sunshine,  
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said very arohly:  
"Now that our terrible Captain has gone in pursuit of the  
Indians,  
Where he is happier far than he would be commanding a  
household,  
You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that happened be-  
tween you,  
When you returned last night, and said how ungrateful you  
found me."  
Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the whole of  
the story,—  
Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of Miles  
Standish.  
Whereat the maiden smiled, and said, between laughing and  
earnest,  
"He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment!"  
But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how much he had  
suffered,—  
How he had even determined to sail that day in the *May-  
flower*,  
And had remained for her sake on hearing the dangers that  
threatened,—  
All her manner was changed, and she said, with a faltering  
accent,

“Truly I thank you for this: how good you have been to me  
always!”

Thus as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem journeys  
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly back-  
ward,  
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of con-  
trition;  
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever advancing,  
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of his  
longings,  
Urged by the fervour of love, and withheld by remorseful mis-  
givings.

## VII.

## THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH.

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish was marching  
steadily northward,  
Winding through forest and swamp, and along the trend of  
the sea-shore,  
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger  
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odour of  
powder  
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the scents of the  
forest.  
Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his dis-  
comfort;  
He who was used to success, and to easy victories always,  
Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a  
maiden,

Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend whom most  
he had trusted!

Ah! 'twas too much to be borne, and he fretted and chafed  
in his armour!

"I alone am to blame," he muttered, "for mine was the folly.  
What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and gray in the  
harness,

Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the wooing of  
maidens?

'Twas but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like so many  
others!

What I thought was a flower is only a weed, and is worthless;  
Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away, and hence-  
forward

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of dangers!"

Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and discomfort,  
While he was marching by day or lying at night in the  
forest,

Looking up at the trees, and the constellations beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an Indian encamp-  
ment

Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea and the  
forest;

Women at work by the tents, and the warriors, horrid with  
war-paint,

Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together;

Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach of the  
white men,

Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre and musket,  
Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from among them  
advancing,

Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs as a present;  
Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts there was hatred.  
Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers gigantic in stature,  
Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king of Bashan;  
One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called Wattawamat.  
Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum,  
Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.  
Other arms had they none, for they were cunning and crafty.  
“Welcome, English!” they said,—these words they had learned from the traders  
Touching at times on the coast, to barter and chaffer for peltries.  
Then in their native tongue they began to parley with Standish,  
Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend of the white man,  
Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for muskets and powder,  
Kept by the white man, they said, concealed with the plague in his cellars,  
Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the red man!  
But when Standish refused, and said he would give them the Bible,  
Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast and to bluster.  
Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front of the other,

And, with a lofty demeanour, thus vauntingly spake to the Captain:

"Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of the Captain, Angry is he in his heart; but the heart of the brave Wattawamat

Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a woman, But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree riven by lightning,

Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons about him, Shouting, 'Who is there here to fight with the brave Wattawamat?'"

Then he unsheathed his knife, and whetting the blade on his left hand,

Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face on the handle, Saying, with bitter expression, and look of sinister meaning:

"I have another at home, with the face of a man on the handle;

By-and-by they shall marry; and there will be plenty of children!"

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insulting Miles Standish:

While with his fingers he patted the knife that hung at his bosom,

Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he muttered,

"By-and-by it shall see; it shall eat; ah, ha! but shall speak not!

This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent to destroy us!

He is a little man; let him go and work with the women!"

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of  
Indians  
Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,  
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their bow-  
strings,  
Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of their  
ambush.  
But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and treated them  
smoothly;  
So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the days of the  
fathers.  
But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the taunt, and  
the insult,  
All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston  
de Standish,  
Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his  
temples.  
Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and snatching his knife  
from its scabbard,  
Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage  
Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierceness  
upon it.  
Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound of the  
war-whoop,  
And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of December,  
Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery arrows.  
Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the cloud came the  
lightning,  
Out of the lightning thunder; and death unseen ran before it.  
Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp and in  
thicket,  
Hotly pursued and beset; but their sachem, the brave Wat-  
tawamat,

Fled not; he was dead. Unswerving and swift had a bullet  
Passed through his brain, and he fell with both hands clutch-  
ing the greensward,  
Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the land of his  
fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the warriors lay, and  
above them,  
Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of the  
white man.  
Smiling, at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of  
Plymouth:  
"Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his strength,  
and his stature,—  
Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man; but  
I see now  
Big enough have you been to lay him speechless before you!"

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the stalwart  
Miles Standish.  
When the tidings thereof were brought to the village of Ply-  
mouth,  
And as a trophy of war the head of the brave Wattawamat  
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once was a church  
and a fortress,  
All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord, and took  
courage.  
Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of terror,  
Thanking God in her heart that she had not married Miles  
Standish;  
Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from his battles,  
He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and reward of  
his valour.



## VIII.

## THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

Month after month passed away, and in autumn the ships of  
the merchants

Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and corn for the  
Pilgrims.

All in the village was peace; the men were intent on their  
labours,

Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot and with  
merestead,

Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the grass in the  
meadows,

Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer in the  
forest.

All in the village was peace; but at times the rumour of war-  
fare

Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of danger.

Bravely the stalwart Miles Standish was scouring the land  
with his forces,

Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien armies,

Till his name had become a sound of fear to the nations.

Anger was still in his heart, but at times the remorse and  
contrition

Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate outbreak,  
Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush of a river,  
Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter and brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new habitation,  
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the firs of the  
forest.

Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was covered with  
rushes;  
Latticed the windows were, and the window-panes were of  
paper,  
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were excluded.  
There too he dug a well, and around it planted an orchard:  
Still may be seen to this day some trace of the well and the  
orchard.  
Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and secure from  
annoyance,  
Raghorn, the snow-white steer, that had fallen to Alden's  
allotment  
In the division of cattle, might ruminate in the night-time  
Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by sweet penny-  
royal.

Oft when his labour was finished, with eager feet would  
the dreamer  
Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to the house  
of Priscilla,  
Led by illusions romantic and subtle deceptions of fancy,  
Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the semblance of  
friendship.  
Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the walls of his  
dwelling;  
Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the soil of his  
garden;  
Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible on Sun-  
day  
Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described in the  
Proverbs,—  
How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her always,  
How all the days of her life she will do him good, and not evil,

How she seeketh the wool and the flax and worketh with  
gladness,  
How she layeth her hand to the spindle and holdeth the  
distaff,  
How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or her house-  
hold,  
Knowing her household are clothed with the scarlet cloth of  
her weaving!

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the autumn,  
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her dexterous  
fingers,  
As if the thread she was spinning were that of his life and his  
fortune,  
After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound of the  
spindle:  
"Truly, Priscilla," he said, "when I see you spinning and  
spinning,  
Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of others,  
Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a  
moment;  
You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful  
Spinner."  
Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and swifter;  
the spindle  
Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped short in her  
fingers;  
While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the mischief, con-  
tinued:  
"You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the queen of  
Helvetia;  
She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of South-  
ampton,

Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o'er valley and meadow  
and mountain,

Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to her  
saddle.

She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed into a  
proverb.

So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-wheel shall  
no longer

Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its chambers with  
music.

Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it was in their  
childhood,

Praising the good old times, and the days of Priscilla the  
spinner!"

Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,  
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise  
was the sweetest,

Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of her spin-  
ning,

Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering phrases  
of Alden:

"Come, you must not be idle; if I am a pattern for house-  
wives,

Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of hus-  
bands.

Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it ready for  
knitting;

Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed  
and the manners,

Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times of John  
Alden!"

Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his hands she  
adjusted,

He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended before  
him,  
She standing graceful, erect, and winding the thread from  
his fingers,  
Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,  
Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled expertly  
Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how could she  
help it?—  
Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his body.

Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless messenger  
entered,  
Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from the village.  
Yes; Miles Standish was dead!—an Indian had brought  
them the tidings,—  
Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the front of the  
battle.  
Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole of his forces;  
All the town would be burned, and all the people be murdered!  
Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the hearts of the  
hearers.  
Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face looking backward  
Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted in horror;  
But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the arrow  
Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own, and had  
sundered  
Once and for ever the bonds that held him bound as a captive,  
Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of his freedom,  
Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what he was  
doing,

Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form of Priscilla,  
Pressing her close to his heart, as for ever his own, and exclaiming:  
"Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them asunder!"

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,  
Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks, and pursuing  
Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer,  
Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest;  
So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,  
Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing asunder,  
Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,  
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.

## IX.

## THE WEDDING-DAY.

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of purple and scarlet,  
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his garments resplendent,  
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on his forehead,  
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and pomegranates.  
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of vapour beneath him  
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his feet was a laver!

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the Puritan maiden.  
Friends were assembled together; the Elder and Magistrate  
also  
Graced the scene with their presence, and stood like the Law  
and the Gospel,  
One with the sanction of earth and one with the blessing of  
heaven.  
Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of Ruth and of  
Boaz.  
Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of be-  
trothal,  
Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magistrate's  
presence,  
After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.  
Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder of Plymouth  
Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were founded that  
day in affection,  
Speaking of life and of death, and imploring divine benec-  
dictions.

Lo! when the service was ended, a form appeared on the  
threshold,  
Clad in armour of steel, a sombre and sorrowful figure!  
Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the strange ap-  
parition?  
Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her face on his  
shoulder?  
Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral illusion?  
Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid the be-  
trothal?  
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited, unwel-  
comed;  
Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times an expression

Softening the gloom and revealing the warm heart hidden  
beneath them,

As when across the sky the driving rack of the rain-cloud  
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by its bright-  
ness.

Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips but was silent,  
As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting intention.

But when were ended the troth and the prayer and the last  
benediction,

Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with amaze-  
ment

Bodily there in his armour Miles Standish the Captain of  
Plymouth!

Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emotion,  
"Forgive me!

I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I cherished the  
feeling;

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God! it is  
ended.

Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins of Hugh  
Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of John  
Alden."

Thereupon answered the bridegroom: "Let all be forgotten  
between us,—

All save the dear old friendship, and that shall grow older  
and dearer!"

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted Priscilla  
Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned gentry in  
England,

Something of camp and of court, of town and of country,  
commingled,



Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly lauding her husband.

Then he said with a smile: "I should have remembered the adage,—

If you would be well served, you must serve yourself; and moreover,

No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of Christmas!"

Great was the people's amazement, and greater yet their rejoicing,

Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face of their Captain, Whom they had mourned as dead; and they gathered and crowded about him,

Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of bride and of bridegroom,

Questioning, answering, laughing, and each interrupting the other,

Till the good Captain declared, being quite overpowered and bewildered,

He had rather by far break into an Indian encampment, Than come again to a wedding to which he had not been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood with the bride at the doorway,

Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and beautiful morning.

Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad in the sunshine,

Lay extended before them the land of toil and privation; There were the graves of the dead, and the barren waste of the sea-shore,

There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the meadows;  
But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the Garden of Eden,  
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise and stir of departure,  
Friends coming forth from the house, and impatient of longer delaying,  
Each with his plan for the day, and the work that was left uncompleted.  
Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of wonder,  
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so proud of Priscilla,  
Brought out his snow-white steer, obeying the hand of its master,  
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nostrils,  
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed for a saddle,  
She should not walk, he said, through the dust and heat of the noonday;  
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along like a peasant.  
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the others,  
Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the hand of her husband,  
Gaily, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her palfrey.  
"Nothing is wanting now," he said with a smile, "but the distaff;  
Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful Bertha!"

Onward the bridal procession now moved to their new habitation,  
Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing together.  
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the ford in  
the forest,  
Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream of love  
through its bosom,  
'Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of the azure  
abysses.  
Down through the golden leaves the sun was pouring his  
splendours,  
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches above them  
suspended,  
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of the pine and  
the fir-tree,  
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the valley of  
Eshcol.  
Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral ages,  
Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling Rebecca  
and Isaac,  
Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,  
Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers.  
So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the bridal  
procession.

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# BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

## FLIGHT THE FIRST.

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. . . come i gru van cantando lor lai,  
Facendo in aer di sè lunga riga.

DANTE.

9

## PROMETHEUS,

OR

### THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT.

Of Prometheus, how undaunted  
On Olympus' shining bastions  
His audacious foot he planted,  
Myths are told and songs are chanted,  
Full of promptings and suggestions.

Beautiful is the tradition  
Of that flight through heavenly portals,  
The old classic superstition  
Of the theft and the transmission  
Of the fire of the Immortals!

First the deed of noble daring,  
Born of heavenward aspiration,  
Then the fire with mortals sharing,  
Then the vulture,—the despairing  
Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

All is but a symbol painted  
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer;  
Only those are crowned and sainted  
Who with grief have been acquainted,  
Making nations nobler, freer.

In their feverish exultations,  
In their triumph and their yearning,  
In their passionate pulsations,  
In their words among the nations,  
The Promethean fire is burning.

Shall it, then, be unavailing,  
All this toil for human culture?  
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,  
Must they see above them sailing  
O'er life's barren crags the vulture?

Such a fate as this was Dante's,  
By defeat and exile maddened;  
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,  
Nature's priests and Corybantes,  
By affliction touched and saddened.

But the glories so transcendent  
That around their memories cluster,  
And, on all their steps attendant,  
Make their darkened lives resplendent  
With such gleams of inward lustre!

All the melodies mysterious,  
Through the dreary darkness chanted;  
Thoughts in attitudes imperious,  
Voices soft, and deep, and serious,  
Words that whispered, songs that haunted!

All the soul in rapt suspension,  
All the quivering, palpitating  
Chords of life in utmost tension,  
With the fervour of invention,  
With the rapture of creating!

Ah, Prometheus! heaven-scaling!  
In such hours of exultation  
Even the faintest heart, unquailing,  
Might behold the vulture sailing  
Round the cloudy crags Caucasian!

Though to all there is not given  
Strength for such sublime endeavour,  
Thus to scale the walls of heaven,  
And to leaven with fiery leaven  
All the hearts of men for ever;

Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted  
Honour and believe the presage,  
Hold aloft their torches lighted,  
Gleaming through the realms benighted,  
As they onward bear the message!

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### THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

SAINT AUGUSTINE! well hast thou said,  
That of our vices we can frame  
A ladder, if we will but tread  
Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events,  
That with the hour begin and end,  
Our pleasures and our discontents,  
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,  
That makes another's virtues less;  
The revel of the treacherous wine,  
And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things;  
The strife for triumph more than truth;  
The hardening of the heart, that brings  
Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,  
That have their root in thoughts of ill;  
Whatever hinders or impedes  
The action of the nobler will;—

All these must first be trampled down  
Beneath our feet, if we would gain  
In the bright fields of fair renown  
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;  
But we have feet to scale and climb  
By slow degrees, by more and more,  
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone  
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,  
When nearer seen, and better known,  
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear  
Their solid bastions to the skies,  
Are crossed by pathways, that appear  
As we to higher levels rise.



The heights by great men reached and kept,  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore  
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,  
We may discern—unseen before—  
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past  
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,  
If, rising on its wrecks, at last  
To something nobler we attain.

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### THE PHANTOM SHIP.

IN Mather's Magnalia Christi,  
Of the old colonial time,  
May be found in prose the legend  
That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,  
And the keen and frosty airs,  
That filled her sails at parting,  
Were heavy with good men's prayers.

"O Lord! if it be thy pleasure"—  
Thus prayed the old divine—  
"To bury our friends in the ocean,  
Take them; for they are thine!"

But Master Lamberton muttered,  
And under his breath said he,  
"This ship is so crank and walty,  
I fear our grave she will be!"

And the ships that came from England,  
When the winter months were gone,  
Brought no tidings of this vessel,  
Nor of Master Lamberton.

This put the people to praying  
That the Lord would let them hear  
What in his greater wisdom  
He had done with friends so dear.

And at last their prayers were answered:—  
It was in the month of June,  
An hour before the sunset  
Of a windy afternoon,

When steadily steering landward,  
A ship was seen below,  
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,  
Who sailed so long ago.

On she came with a cloud of canvas,  
Right against the wind that blew,  
Until the eye could distinguish  
The faces of the crew.

Then fell her straining topmasts,  
Hanging tangled in the shrouds,  
And her sails were loosened and lifted,  
And blown away like clouds.

And the masts, with all their rigging,  
Fell slowly, one by one,  
And the hulk dilated and vanished.  
As a sea-mist in the sun!

And the people who saw this marvel  
Each said unto his friend,  
That this was the mould of their vessel,  
And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village  
Gave thanks to God in prayer,  
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,  
He had sent this Ship of Air.

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### THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS.

A mist was driving down the British Channel,  
The day was just begun,  
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,  
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,  
And the white sails of ships;  
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon  
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and Dover  
Were all alert that day,  
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,  
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,  
Their cannon, through the night,  
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,  
The seacoast opposite.

And now they roared at drumbeat from their stations  
On every citadel;  
Each answering each, with morning salutations,  
That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,  
Replied the distant forts,  
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden  
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,  
No drumbeat from the wall,  
No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,  
Awaken with its call!

No more, surveying with an eye impartial  
The long line of the coast,  
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field-marshal  
Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,  
In sombre harness mailed,  
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,  
The rampart wall has scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,  
The dark and silent room,  
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,  
The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,  
But smote the Warden hoar;  
Ah! what a blow! that made all England tremble  
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,  
The sun rose bright o'erhead;  
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated  
That a great man was dead.

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## HAUNTED HOUSES.

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died  
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors  
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,  
With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,  
Along the passages they come and go,  
Impalpable impressions on the air,  
A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table, than the hosts  
Invited; the illuminated hall  
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,  
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see  
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;  
He but perceives what is; while unto me  
All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands;  
Owners and occupants of earlier dates  
From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands,  
And hold in mortmain still their old estates.

The spirit-world around this world of sense  
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere  
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense  
A vital breath of more ethereal air.

Our little lives are kept in equipoise  
By opposite attractions and desires;  
The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,  
And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar  
Of earthly wants and aspirations high,  
Come from the influence of an unseen star,  
An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud  
Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,  
Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd  
Into the realm of mystery and night,—

So from the world of spirits there descends  
A bridge of light, connecting it with this,  
O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends,  
Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.

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f1

## IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CAMBRIDGE.

IN the village churchyard she lies,  
Dust is in her beautiful eyes,  
No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs;  
At her feet and at her head  
Lies a slave to attend the dead,  
But their dust is white as hers.

Was she a lady of high degree,  
So much in love with the vanity  
And foolish pomp of this world of ours?  
Or was it Christian charity,  
And lowliness and humility,  
The richest and rarest of all dowers?

Who shall tell us? No one speaks;  
No colour shoots into those cheeks,  
Either of anger or of pride,  
At the rude question we have asked;  
Nor will the mystery be unmasked  
By those who are sleeping at her side.

Hereafter?—And do you think to look  
On the terrible pages of that Book  
To find her failings, faults, and errors?  
Ah, you will then have other cares,  
In your own short-comings and despairs,  
In your own secret sins and terrors!

## THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S-NEST.

ONCE the Emperor Charles of Spain,  
With his swarthy, grave commanders,  
I forget in what campaign,  
Long besieged, in mud and rain,  
Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,  
In great boots of Spanish leather,  
Striding with a measured tramp,  
These Hidalgos, dull and damp,  
Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,  
Over upland and through hollow,  
Giving their impatience vent,  
Perched upon the Emperor's tent,  
In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,  
Built of clay and hair of horses,  
Mane, or tail, or dragoon's crest,  
Found on hedgerows east and west,  
After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,  
As he twirled his grey mustachio,  
"Sure this swallow overhead  
Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,  
And the Emperor but a Macho!"



Hearing his imperial name  
Coupled with those words of malice,  
Half in anger, half in shame,  
Forth the great campaigner came,  
Slowly from his canvas palace.

"Let no hand the bird molest,"  
Said he solemnly, "nor hurt her!"  
Adding then, by way of jest,  
"Golondrina is my guest,  
'T is the wife of some deserter!"

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,  
Through the camp was spread the rumour,  
And the soldiers, as they quaffed  
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed  
At the Emperor's pleasant humour.

So unharmed and unafraid  
Sat the swallow still and brooded,  
Till the constant cannonade  
Through the walls a breach had made,  
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,  
Struck its tents as if disbanding,  
Only not the Emperor's tent,  
For he ordered, ere he went,  
Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,  
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,  
Till the brood was fledged and flown,  
Singing o'er those walls of stone  
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

## THE TWO ANGELS.

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,  
Passed o'er our village as the morning broke,  
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,  
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,  
Alike their features and their robes of white;  
But one was crowned with amaranth, as with flame,  
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way;  
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,  
"Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray  
The place where thy beloved are at rest!"

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,  
Descending, at my door began to knock,  
And my soul sank within me, as in wells  
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognized the nameless agony,  
The terror and the tremor and the pain,  
That oft before had filled or haunted me,  
And now returned with threefold strength again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,  
And listened, for I thought I heard God's voice;  
And knowing whatsoe'er He sent was best,  
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile, that filled the house with light,  
"My errand is not Death, but Life," he said;  
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,  
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'T was at thy door, O friend! and not at mine,  
The angel with the amaranthine wreath,  
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,  
Whispered a word that had a sound like Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,  
A shadow on those features fair and thin;  
And softly, from that hushed and darkened room,  
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God! If He but wave his hand,  
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,  
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
Lo! He looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his;  
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er;  
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,  
Against his messengers to shut the door?

10

## DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT.

In broad daylight, and at noon,  
Yesterday I saw the moon  
Sailing high, but faint and white,  
As a schoolboy's paper kite.

In broad daylight, yesterday,  
I read a Poet's mystic lay;  
And it seemed to me at most  
As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day  
Like a passion died away,  
And the night, serene and still,  
Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon in all her pride,  
Like a spirit glorified,  
Filled and overflowed the night  
With revelations of her light.

And the Poet's song again  
Passed like music through my brain;  
Night interpreted to me  
All its grace and mystery.

---

## THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

How strange it seems! These Hebrews in their graves,  
Close by the street of this fair seaport town,  
Silent beside the never-silent waves,  
At rest in all this moving up and down!

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep  
Wave their broad curtains in the south-wind's breath,  
While underneath such leafy tents they keep  
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,  
That pave with level flags their burial-place,  
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down  
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

The very names recorded here are strange,  
Of foreign accent, and of different climes;  
Alvares and Rivera interchange  
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

"Blessed be God! for He created Death!"  
The mourners said, "and Death is rest and peace;"  
Then added, in the certainty of faith,  
"And giveth life that never more shall cease."

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,  
No Psalms of David now the silence break,  
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue  
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,  
And not neglected; for a hand unseen,  
Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,  
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

How came they here? What burst of Christian hate,  
What persecution, merciless and blind,  
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—  
These Ishmaels and Hagars of mankind?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,  
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire;  
Taught in the school of patience to endure  
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread  
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,  
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,  
And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears.

Anathema maranatha! was the cry  
That rang from town to town, from street to street;  
At every gate the accursèd Mordecai  
Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand  
Walked with them through the world where'er they went;  
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,  
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast  
Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,  
And all the great traditions of the Past  
They saw reflected in the coming time.

And thus for ever with reverted look  
The mystic volume of the world they read,  
Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book  
Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah! what once has been shall be no more!  
The groaning earth in travail and in pain  
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,  
And the dead nations never rise again.

---

## OLIVER BASSELIN.

IN the Valley of the Vire  
Still is seen an ancient mill,  
With its gables quaint and queer,  
And beneath the window sill,  
On the stone,  
These words alone:  
"Oliver Basselin lived here."

Far above it, on the steep,  
Ruined stands the old Château;  
Nothing but the donjon-keep  
Left for shelter or for show.  
Its vacant eyes  
Stare at the skies,  
Stare at the valley green and deep.

Once a convent, old and brown,  
Looked—but ah! it looks no more,  
From the neighbouring hillside down  
On the rushing and the roar  
Of the stream  
Whose sunny gleam  
Cheers the little Norman town.

In that darksome mill of stone,  
To the water's dash and din,  
Careless, humble, and unknown,  
Sang the poet Basselin  
Songs that fill  
That ancient mill  
With a splendour of its own.

Never feeling of unrest  
Broke the pleasant dream he dreamed;  
Only made to be his nest,  
All the lovely valley seemed;  
No desire  
Of soaring higher  
Stirred or fluttered in his breast.

True, his songs were not divine;  
Were not songs of that high art,  
Which, as winds do in the pine,  
Find an answer in each heart;  
But the mirth  
Of this green earth  
Laughed and revelled in his line



From the alehouse and the inn,  
Opening on the narrow street,  
Came the loud, convivial din,  
Singing and applause of feet,  
The laughing lays  
That in those days  
Sang the poet Basselin.

In the castle, cased in steel,  
Knights, who fought at Agincourt,  
Watched and waited, spur on heel;  
But the poet sang for sport  
Songs that rang  
Another clang,  
Songs that lowlier hearts could feel.

In the convent, clad in gray,  
Sat the monks in lonely cells,  
Paced the cloisters, knelt to pray,  
And the poet heard their bells;  
But his rhymes  
Found other chimes,  
Nearer to the earth than they.

Gone are all the barons bold,  
Gone are all the knights and squires,  
Gone the abbot stern and cold,  
And the brotherhood of friars;  
Not a name  
Remains to fame,  
From those mouldering days of old!

But the poet's memory here  
Of the landscape makes a part;  
Like the river, swift and clear,  
Flows his song through many a heart;  
Haunting still  
That ancient mill,  
In the Valley of the Vire.

---

### VICTOR GALBRAITH.

UNDER the walls of Monterey  
At daybreak the bugles began to play,  
Victor Galbraith!  
In the mist of the morning damp and gray,  
These were the words they seemed to say:  
"Come forth to thy death,  
Victor Galbraith!"

Forth he came, with a martial tread;  
Firm was his step, erect his head;  
Victor Galbraith,  
He who so well the bugle played,  
Could not mistake the words it said:  
"Come forth to thy death,  
Victor Galbraith!"

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,  
He looked at the files of musketry,  
Victor Galbraith!

And he said, with a steady voice and eye,  
"Take good aim; I am ready to die!"  
Thus challenges death  
Victor Galbraith.

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,  
Six leaden balls on their errand sped;  
Victor Galbraith  
Falls to the ground, but he is not dead;  
His name was not stamped on those balls of lead,  
And they only scath  
Victor Galbraith.

Three balls are in his breast and brain,  
But he rises out of the dust again,  
Victor Galbraith!  
The water he drinks has a bloody stain;  
"O kill me, and put me out of my pain!"  
In his agony prayeth  
Victor Galbraith.

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,  
And the bugler has died a death of shame,  
Victor Galbraith!  
His soul has gone back to whence it came,  
And no one answers to the name,  
When the Sergeant saith,  
"Victor Galbraith!"

Under the walls of Monterey  
By night a bugle is heard to play,  
Victor Galbraith!

Through the mist of the valley damp and gray  
The sentinels hear the sound, and say,  
    "That is the wraith  
    Of Victor Galbraith!"

---

### MY LOST YOUTH.

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town  
    That is seated by the sea;  
Often in thought go up and down  
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
    And my youth comes back to me.  
    And a verse of a Lapland song  
    Is haunting my memory still:  
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
    And catch, in sudden gleams,  
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
    Of all my boyish dreams,  
    And the burden of that old song,  
    It murmurs and whispers still:  
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharfs and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free;  
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.  
And the voice of that wayward song  
Is singing and saying still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
And the fort upon the hill;  
The sun-rise gun, with its hollow roar,  
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
And the bugle wild and shrill.  
And the music of that old song  
Throbs in my memory still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,  
How it thundered o'er the tide!  
And the dead captains, as they lay  
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,  
Where they in battle died.  
And the sound of that mournful song  
Goes through me with a thrill:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
And the friendships old and the early loves  
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves  
In quiet neighbourhoods.  
And the verse of that sweet old song,  
It flutters and murmurs still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
Across the schoolboy's brain;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.  
And the voice of that fitful song  
Sings on, and is never still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;  
There are dreams that cannot die;  
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.  
And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
When I visit the dear old town;  
But the native air is pure and sweet,  
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,  
As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain,  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that were,  
I find my lost youth again.  
And the strange and beautiful song,  
The groves are repeating it still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

---

## THE ROPEWALK.

In that building, long and low,  
With its windows all a-row,  
Like the portholes of a hulk,  
Human spiders spin and spin,  
Backward down their thread so thin  
Dropping, each a hempen bulk.

At the end, an open door;  
Squares of sunshine on the floor  
Light the long and dusky lane;  
And the whirring of a wheel,  
Dull and drowsy, makes me feel  
All its spokes are in my brain.

As the spinners to the end  
Downward go and re-ascend,  
Gleam the long threads in the sun;  
While within this brain of mine  
Cobwebs brighter and more fine  
By the busy wheel are spun.

Two fair maidens in a swing,  
Like white doves upon the wing,  
First before my vision pass;  
Laughing, as their gentle hands  
Closely clasp the twisted strands,  
At their shadow on the grass.



Then a booth of mountebanks,  
With its smell of tan and planks,  
    And a girl poised high in air  
On a cord, in spangled dress,  
With a faded loveliness,  
    And a weary look of care.

Then a homestead among farms,  
And a woman with bare arms  
    Drawing water from a well;  
As the bucket mounts apace,  
With it mounts her own fair face,  
    As at some magician's spell.

Then an old man in a tower,  
Ringing loud the noontide hour,  
    While the rope coils round and round  
Like a serpent at his feet,  
And again, in swift retreat,  
    Nearly lifts him from the ground.

Then within a prison-yard,  
Faces fixed, and stern, and hard,  
    Laughter and indecent mirth;  
Ah! it is the gallows-tree!  
Breath of Christian charity,  
    Blow, and sweep it from the earth!

Then a schoolboy, with his kite  
Gleaming in a sky of light,  
    And an eager, upward look;  
Steeds pursued through lane and field;  
Fowls with their snares concealed;  
    And an angler by a brook.

Ships rejoicing in the breeze,  
Wrecks that float o'er unknown seas,  
    Anchors dragged through faithless sand;  
Sea-fog drifting overhead,  
And, with lessening line and lead,  
    Sailors feeling for the land.

All these scenes do I behold,  
These, and many left untold,  
    In that building long and low;  
While the wheel goes round and round,  
With a drowsy, dreamy sound,  
    And the spinners backward go.

---

### THE GOLDEN MILESTONE.

LEAFLESS are the trees; their purple branches  
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,  
    Rising silent  
In the Red Sea of the Winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,  
Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,  
    Smoky columns  
Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light;  
Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,  
    Social watch-fires  
Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,  
And like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree  
    For its freedom  
Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.

By the fireside there are old men seated,  
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,  
    Asking sadly  
Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,  
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,  
    Asking blindly  
Of the future what it cannot give them.

By the fireside tragedies are acted  
In whose scenes appear two actors only,  
    Wife and husband,  
And above them God the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,  
Wives and children, with fair thoughtful faces,  
    Waiting, watching  
For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Milestone;  
Is the central point, from which he measures  
    Every distance  
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it;  
Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,  
    As he heard them  
When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,  
Nor the march of the encroaching city,  
    Drives an exile  
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead.

We may build more splendid habitations,  
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,  
    But we cannot  
Buy with gold the old associations!

---

### CATAWBA WINE.

THIS song of mine  
Is a Song of the Vine,  
To be sung by the glowing embers  
    Of wayside inns,  
    When the rain begins  
To darken the drear Novembers.

It is not a song  
Of the Scuppernong,  
From warm Carolinian valleys,  
    Nor the Isabel  
    And the Muscadel  
That bask in our garden alleys.

Nor the red Mustang,  
Whose clusters hang  
O'er the waves of the Colorado,  
    And the fiery flood  
    Of whose purple blood  
Has a dash of Spanish bravado.

For richest and best  
Is the wine of the West,  
That grows by the Beautiful River;  
Whose sweet perfume  
Fills all the room  
With a benison on the giver.

And as hollow trees  
Are the haunts of bees,  
For ever going and coming;  
So this crystal hive  
Is all alive  
With a swarming and buzzing and humming.

Very good in its way  
Is the Verzenay,  
Or the Sillery soft and creamy;  
But Catawba wine  
Has a taste more divine,  
More dulcet, delicious, and dreamy.

There grows no vine  
By the haunted Rhine,  
By Danube or Guadalquivir,  
Nor on island or cape,  
That bears such a grape  
As grows by the Beautiful River.

Drugged is their juice  
For foreign use,  
When shipped o'er the reeling Atlantic,  
To rack our brains  
With the fever pains  
That have driven the Old World frantic.

To the sewers and sinks  
With all such drinks,  
And after them tumble the mixer;  
For a poison malign  
Is such Borgia wine,  
Or at best but a Devil's Elixir.

While pure as a spring  
Is the wine I sing,  
And to praise it, one needs but name it;  
For Catawba wine  
Has need of no sign,  
No tavern-bush to proclaim it.

And this Song of the Vine,  
This greeting of mine,  
The winds and the birds shall deliver  
To the Queen of the West,  
In her garlands dressed,  
On the banks of the Beautiful River.

## SANTA FILOMENA.

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,  
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,  
Our hearts, in glad surprise,  
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls  
Into our inmost being rolls,  
And lifts us unawares  
Out of all meaner cares.

Honour to those words or deeds  
Thus help us in our daily needs,  
And by their overflow  
Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read  
Of the great army of the dead,  
The trenches cold and damp,  
The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,  
In dreary hospitals of pain,  
The cheerless corridors,  
The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery  
A lady with a lamp I see  
Pass through the glimmering gloom,  
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,  
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss  
Her shadow, as it falls  
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be  
Opened and then closed suddenly,  
The vision came and went,  
The light shone and was spent

On England's annals, through the long  
Hereafter of her speech and song,  
That light its rays shall cast  
From portals of the past.

A lady with a Lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good,  
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here  
The palm, the lily, and the spear,  
The symbols that of yore  
Saint Filomena bore.

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## THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

A LEAF FROM KING ALFRED'S OROSIUS.

OTHER, the old sea-captain,  
Who dwelt in Helgoland,  
To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,  
Brought a snow-white walrus-tooth,  
Which he held in his brown right hand.

His figure was tall and stately,  
Like a boy's his eye appeared;  
His hair was yellow as hay,  
But threads of a silvery gray  
Gleamed in his tawny beard.

Hearty and hale was Other,  
His cheek had the colour of oak;  
With a kind of laugh in his speech,  
Like the sea-tide on a beach,  
As unto the King he spoke.

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,  
Had a book upon his knees,  
And wrote down the wondrous tale  
Of him who was first to sail  
Into the Arctic seas.

"So far I live to the northward,  
No man lives north of me;  
To the east are wild mountain-chains,  
And beyond them meres and plains;  
To the westward all is sea.

"So far I live to the northward,  
From the harbour of Skeringes-hale,  
If you only sailed by day,  
With a fair wind all the way,  
More than a month would you sail.

"I own six hundred reindeer,  
With sheep and swine beside;  
I have tribute from the Finns,  
Whalebone and reindeer-skins,  
And ropes of walrus-hide.

"I ploughed the land with horses,  
But my heart was ill at ease,  
For the old seafaring men  
Came to me now and then,  
With their sagas of the seas;--

"Of Iceland and of Greenland,  
And the stormy Hebrides,  
And the undiscovered deep;—  
I could not eat nor sleep  
For thinking of those seas.

"To the northward stretched the desert  
How far I fain would know;  
So at last I sallied forth,  
And three days sailed due north,  
As far as the whale-ships go.

"To the west of me was the ocean,  
To the right the desolate shore,  
But I did not slacken sail  
For the walrus or the whale,  
Till after three days more

"The days grew longer and longer,  
Till they became as one,  
And southward through the haze  
I saw the sullen blaze  
Of the red midnight sun.

"And then uprose before me,  
Upon the water's edge,  
The huge and haggard shape  
Of that unknown North Cape  
Whose form is like a wedge.

"The sea was rough and stormy,  
The tempest howled and wailed,  
And the sea-fog, like a ghost,  
Haunted that dreary coast;  
But onward still I sailed.

"Four days I steered to eastward,  
Four days without a night:  
Round in a fiery ring  
Went the great sun, O King,  
With red and lurid light."

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,  
Ceased writing for a while;  
And raised his eyes from his book,  
With a strange and puzzled look,  
And an incredulous smile.

Aut Othere, the old sea-captain,  
He neither paused nor stirred,  
Till the King listened, and then  
Once more took up his pen,  
And wrote down every word.

"And now the land," said Othere,  
    "Bent southward suddenly,  
And I followed the curving shore  
And ever southward bore  
    Into a nameless sea.

"And there we hunted the walrus,  
    The narwhale, and the seal;  
Ha! 'twas a noble game!  
And like the lightning's flame  
    Flew our harpoons of steel.

"There were six of us all together,  
    Norsemen of Helgoland:  
In two days and no more  
We killed of them threescore,  
    And dragged them to the strand!"

Here Alfred the Truth-Teller  
    Suddenly closed his book,  
And lifted his blue eyes,  
With doubt and strange surmise  
    Depicted in their look.

And Othere, the old sea-captain,  
    Stared at him wild and weird,  
Then smiled, till his shining teeth  
Gleamed white from underneath  
    His tawny, quivering beard.

And to the King of the Saxons,  
    In witness of the truth,  
Raising his noble head,  
He stretched his brown hand, and said,  
    "Behold this walrus-tooth!"

---

## DAYBREAK.

A WIND came up out of the sea,  
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,  
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,  
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!  
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,  
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O chanticleer,  
Your clarion blow; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,  
"Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,  
"Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,  
And said, "Not yet! in quiet lie."

---

## THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ.

May 28, 1857.

It was fifty years ago  
In the pleasant month of May,  
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,  
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took  
The child upon her knee,  
Saying: "Here is a story-book  
Thy Father has written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said,  
"Into regions yet untrod;  
And read what is still unread  
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away  
With Nature, the dear old nurse,  
Who sang to him night and day  
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,  
Or his heart began to fail,  
She would sing a more wonderful song,  
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,  
And will not let him go,  
Though at times his heart beats wild  
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud;

Though at times he hears in his dreams  
The Ranz des Vaches of old,  
And the rush of mountain streams  
From glaciers clear and cold;

And the mother at home says, "Hark!  
For his voice I listen and yearn;  
It is growing late and dark,  
And my boy does not return!"

---

### CHILDREN.

Come to me, O ye children!  
For I hear you at your play,  
And the questions that perplexed me  
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,  
That look towards the sun,  
Where thoughts are singing swallows  
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,  
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,  
But in mine is the wind of Autumn,  
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us  
If the children were no more?  
We should dread the desert behind us  
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,  
With light and air for food,  
Ere their sweet and tender juices  
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children;  
Through them it feels the glow  
Of a brighter and sunnier climate  
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!  
And whisper in my ear  
What the birds and the winds are singing  
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,  
And the wisdom of our books,  
When compared with your caresses,  
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads  
That ever were sung or said;  
For ye are living poems,  
And all the rest are dead.

---



## SANDALPHON.

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,  
In the Legends the Rabbins have told  
Of the limitless realms of the air,—  
Have you read it,—the marvellous story  
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,  
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates  
Of the City Celestial he waits,  
With his feet on the ladder of light,  
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,  
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered  
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire  
Chant only one hymn, and expire  
With the song's irresistible stress;  
Expire in their rapture and wonder,  
As harp-strings are broken asunder  
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,  
Unmoved by the rush of the song,  
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,  
Among the dead angels, the deathless  
Sandalphon stands listening breathless  
To sounds that ascend from below;—

From the spirits on earth that adore,  
From the souls that entreat and implore

In the fervour and passion of prayer;  
From the hearts that are broken with losses,  
And weary with dragging the crosses  
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,  
And they change into flowers in his hands,  
Into garlands of purple and red;  
And beneath the great arch of the portal,  
Through the streets of the City Immortal  
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—  
A fable, a phantom, a show,  
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;  
Yet the old mediæval tradition,  
The beautiful, strange superstition,  
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,  
And the welkin above is all white,  
All throbbing and panting with stars,  
Among them majestic is standing  
Sandalphon the angel, expanding  
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part  
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,  
The frenzy and fire of the brain,  
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,  
The golden pomegranates of Eden,  
To quiet its fever and pain.

---

## EPIMETHEUS,

OR

## THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT.

HAVE I dreamed? or was it real,  
What I saw as in a vision,  
When to marches hymeneal,  
In the land of the ideal,  
Moved my thought o'er fields Elysian?

What! are these the guests whose glances  
Seemed like sunshine gleaming round me;  
These the wild, bewildering fancies,  
That with dithyrambic dances,  
As with magic circles, bound me?

Ah! how cold are their caresses!  
Pallid cheeks and haggard bosoms!  
Spectral gleam their snow-white dresses,  
And from loose, dishevelled tresses  
Fall the hyacinthine blossoms!

O my songs! whose winsome measures  
Filled my heart with secret rapture!  
Children of my golden leisures!  
Must even your delights and pleasures  
Fade and perish with the capture?

Fair they seemed, those songs sonorous,  
When they came to me unbidden;  
Voices single, and in chorus,  
Like the wild birds singing o'er us  
In the dark of branches hidden.

Disenchantment! Disillusion!

Must each noble aspiration  
Come at last to this conclusion,  
Jarring discord, wild confusion,  
Lassitude, renunciation?

Not with steeper fall nor faster,  
From the sun's serene dominions,  
Not through brighter realms nor vaster,  
In swift ruin and disaster  
Icarus fell with shattered pinions!

Sweet Pandora! dear Pandora!  
Why did mighty Jove create thee  
Coy as Thetis, fair as Flora,  
Beautiful as young Aurora,  
If to win thee is to hate thee?

No, not hate thee! for this feeling  
Of unrest and long resistance  
Is but passionate appealing,  
A prophetic whisper stealing  
O'er the chords of our existence.

Him whom thou dost once enamour,  
Thou, beloved, never leavest;  
In life's discord, strife, and clamour,  
Still he feels thy spell of glamour;  
Him of hope thou ne'er bereavest.

Weary hearts by thee are lifted,  
Struggling souls by thee are strengthened.  
Clouds of fear asunder rifted,  
Truth from falsehood cleansed and sifted,  
Lives, like days in summer, lengthened.

Therefore art thou ever dearer,  
O my Sibyl! my deceiver!  
For thou makest each mystery clearer,  
And the unattained seems nearer  
When thou fillest my heart with fever!

Muse of all the Gifts and Graces!  
Though the fields around us wither,  
There are ampler realms and spaces,  
Where no foot has left its traces;  
Let us turn and wander thither.

---

# BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

FLIGHT THE SECOND.

## THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,  
When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,  
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me  
The patter of little feet,  
The sound of a door that is opened,  
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,  
Descending the broad hall stair,  
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,  
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:  
Yet I know by their merry eyes  
They are plotting and planning together  
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,  
A sudden raid from the hall!  
By three doors left unguarded  
'They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret  
O'er the arms and back of my chair;  
If I try to escape, they surround me;  
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,  
Their arms about me entwine,  
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen  
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,  
Because you have scaled the wall,  
Such an old moustache as I am  
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,  
And will not let you depart,  
But put you down into the dungeon  
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,  
Yes, forever and a day,  
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin  
And moulder in dust away!

---



## ENCELADUS.

UNDER Mount Etna he lies,  
It is slumber, it is not death;  
For he struggles at times to arise,  
And above him the lurid skies  
Are hot with his fiery breath.

The crags are piled on his breast,  
The earth is heaped on his head;  
But the groans of his wild unrest,  
Though smothered and half suppressed,  
Are heard, and he is not dead.

And the nations far away  
Are watching with eager eyes;  
They talk together and say,  
"To-morrow, perhaps to-day,  
Enceladus will arise!"

And the old gods, the austere  
Oppressors in their strength,  
Stand aghast and white with fear  
At the ominous sounds they hear,  
And tremble, and mutter, "At length!"

Ah me! for the land that is sown  
With the harvest of despair!  
Where the burning cinders, blown  
From the lips of the overthrown  
Enceladus, fill the air.

Where ashes are heaped in drifts  
Over vineyard and field and town,  
Whenever he starts and lifts  
His head through the blackened rifts  
Of the crags that keep him down.

See, see! the red light shines!  
'T is the glare of his awful eyes!  
And the storm-wind shouts through the pines  
Of Alps and of Apennines,  
"Enceladus, arise!"

---

### THE CUMBERLAND.

At anchor in Hampton Roads we lay,  
On board of the Cumberland, sloop-of-war;  
And at times from the fortress across the bay  
The alarum of drums swept past,  
Or a bugle blast  
From the camp on the shore.

Then far away to the south uprose  
A little feather of snow-white smoke,  
And we knew that the iron ship of our foes  
Was steadily steering its course  
To try the force  
Of our ribs of oak.

Down upon us heavily runs,  
Silent and sullen, the floating fort;  
Then comes a puff of smoke from her guns,  
And leaps the terrible death,  
With fiery breath,  
From each open port.

We are not idle, but send her straight  
Defiance back in a full broadside!  
As hail rebounds from a roof of slate,  
Rebounds our heavier hail  
From each iron scale  
Of the monster's hide.

"Strike your flag!" the rebel cries,  
In his arrogant old plantation strain.  
"Never!" our gallant Morris replies;  
"It is better to sink than to yield!"  
And the whole air pealed  
With the cheers of our men.

Then, like a kraken huge and black,  
She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp!  
Down went the Cumberland all a wrack,  
With a sudden shudder of death,  
And the cannon's breath  
For her dying gasp.

Next morn, as the sun rose over the bay,  
Still floated our flag at the mainmast-head.  
Lord, how beautiful was thy day!  
Every waft of the air  
Was a whisper of prayer,  
Or a dirge for the dead.

Ho! brave hearts that went down in the seas!  
Ye are at peace in the troubled stream,  
Ho! brave land! with hearts like these,  
Thy flag, that is rent in twain,  
Shall be one again,  
And without a seam!

---

### SNOW-FLAKES.

Out of the bosom of the Air,  
Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,  
Over the woodlands brown and bare  
Over the harvest-fields forsaken,  
Silent, and soft, and slow  
Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take  
Suddenly shape in some divine expression,  
Even as the troubled heart doth make  
In the white countenance confession,  
The troubled sky reveals  
The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the air,  
Slowly in silent syllables recorded;  
This is the secret of despair,  
Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,  
Now whispered and revealed  
To wood and field.

---

## A DAY IN JUNE.

O GIFT of God! O perfect day:  
Whereon shall no man work, but play;  
Whereon it is enough for me,  
Not to be doing, but to be!

Through every fibre of my brain,  
Through every nerve, through every vein,  
I feel the electric thrill, the touch  
Of life, that seems almost too much.

I hear the wind among the trees  
Playing celestial symphonies;  
I see the branches downward bent,  
Like keys of some great instrument.

And over me unrolls on high  
The splendid scenery of the sky,  
Where through a sapphire sea the sun  
Sails like a golden galleon,

Towards yonder cloud-land in the West,  
Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,  
Whose steep sierra far uplifts  
Its craggy summits white with drifts.

Blow, winds! and waft through all the rooms  
The snow-flakes of the cherry-blooms!  
Blow, winds! and bend within my reach  
The fiery blossoms of the peach!

O Life and Love! O happy throng  
Of thoughts, whose only speech is song!  
O heart of man! canst thou not be  
Blithe as the air is, and as free?

June, 1860.

---

## SOMETHING LEFT UNDONE.

LABOR with what zeal we will,  
Something still remains undone,  
Something uncompleted still  
Waits the rising of the sun.

By the bedside, on the stair,  
At the threshold, near the gates,  
With its menace or its prayer,  
Like a mendicant it waits;

Waits, and will not go away;  
Waits, and will not be gainsaid;  
By the cares of yesterday  
Each to-day is heavier made;

Till at length it is or seems  
Greater than our strength can bear,  
As the burden of our dreams,  
Pressing on us everywhere.

And we stand from day to day,  
Like the dwarfs of times gone by,  
Who, as Northern legends say,  
On their shoulders held the sky.

## WEARINESS

O LITTLE feet! that such long years  
Must wander on through hopes and fears,  
Must ache and bleed beneath your load;  
I, nearer to the wayside inn  
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,  
Am weary, thinking of your road!

O little hands! that, weak or strong,  
Have still to serve or rule so long,  
Have still so long to give or ask;  
I, who so much with book and pen  
Have toiled among my fellow-men,  
Am weary, thinking of your task.

O little hearts! that throb and beat  
With such impatient, feverish heat,  
Such limitless and strong desires;  
Mine that so long has glowed and burned,  
With passions into ashes turned  
Now covers and conceals its fires.

O little souls! as pure and white  
And crystalline as rays of light  
Direct from heaven, their source divine;  
Refracted through the mist of years,  
How red my setting sun appears,  
How lurid looks this soul of mine!

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## NOTES.

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PAGE 185. *That of our vices we can frame  
A ladder.*

The words of St. Augustine are, "De vitis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus."

Sermon III. *De Ascensione.*

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PAGE 187, THE PHANTOM SHIP.

A detailed account of this "apparition of a Ship in the Air" is given by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi*, Book I. Chap. VI. It is contained in a letter from the Rev. James Pierpont, Pastor of New Haven To this account Mather adds these words:—

"Reader, there being yet living so many credible gentlemen, that were eyewitnesses of this wonderful thing, I venture to publish it for a thing as undoubted as 'tis wonderful."

---

PAGE 194. *And the Emperor but a Macho.*

*Macho*, in Spanish, signifies a mule. *Golondrina* is the feminine form of *Golondrino*, a swallow, and also a cant name for a deserter.

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PAGE 201. OLIVER BASSELIN.

Oliver Basselin, the "*Père joyeux du Vaudeville*," flourished in the fifteenth century, and gave to his convivial songs the name of his native valleys, in which he sang them, Vaux-de-Vire. This name was afterwards corrupted into the modern *Vaudeville*.

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## PAGE 204. VICTOR GALBRAITH.

This poem is founded on fact. Victor Galbraith was a bugler in a company of volunteer cavalry; and was shot in Mexico for some breach of discipline. It is a common superstition among soldiers that no balls will kill them unless their names are written on them. The old proverb says, "Every bullet has its billet."

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PAGE 207. *I remember the sea-fight far away.*

This was the engagement between the *Enterprise* and *Boxer*, off the harbour of Portland, in which both captains were slain. They were buried side by side in the cemetery on Mountjoy.

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## PAGE 217. SANTA FILOMENA.

"At Pisa the church of San Francisco contains a chapel dedicated lately to Santa Filomena; over the altar is a picture, by Sabatelli, representing the Saint as a beautiful, nymph-like figure, floating down from heaven, attended by two angels bearing the lily, palm, and javelin, and beneath, in the foreground, the sick and maimed, who are healed by her intercession." — MRS. JAMESON, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II. 292.

THE END OF VOLUME III.

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